THE Hudson REVIEW

KATHERINE HOSKINS:
KP's Postcard Album

DENIS DONOGHUE:
In the Scene of Being

LORE GROSZMANN AND W. D. SNODGRASS:
Versions from Morgenstern

BENJAMIN DE MOTT:
Letter from the Classes

VERNON YOUNG:
The Hidden Fortress

Poems by WILLIAM DICKEY, CHARLES GULLANS, PETER H. LEE, O. MANDEL, JAMES MERRILL, HOWARD NEMEROV, PAUL RAMSEY, LOUIS SIMPSON.

Reviews by ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS, NEWTON ARVIN, JAMES E. MILLER, JR., JOHN SIMON, B. H. HAGGIN, MARVIN MUDRICK, GERALD WEALES, SIGURD BURCKHARDT, BERNARD STAMBLER.

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The Hudson Review

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KATHERINE HOSKINS lives in Weston, Massachusetts. She is the author of *Out in the Open,* a book of poems published by Macmillan in 1959.

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KATHERINE HOSKINS

KP's Postcard Album

1) A great relief and pleasure at the Wallace Collection to look out of a window away from all the black and gold furniture, away from Watteau and see the steel skeleton of a new construction. With just enough figures walking the beams and a very deep perspective—pale lines into a pale sky—it also made a picture.

2) I note how difficult I often found the old, how often it seemed just too far away ever to reach again. Yet, sitting in the cool and dirty gloom of San Marco, I did for the first time begin to see mosaics. It was as though a fresh ability had been added to me; one whose exercise, even in memory, would refresh me for a long while. I suppose that their structural quality, their being made of something hard rather than flowing, also their giantism and abstraction allow them to speak so clearly to the present day American.

3) New York walks up its island like a child on a see-saw; Paris moves its center of gravity more variously. In the old days, it was no doubt at Notre Dame; later at the Louvre; then at the Opéra. Thirty years ago, it seemed to be Place de la Concorde. The center has now moved down the river where the neglected Trocadero section is peopled by reason of the new art gallery and the Nato buildings.

It may be this activity that makes for the surprising discrepancies in remembered sizes and values. Though they don't dwindle or grow according to the importance given their areas, land-marks are to be seen in different perspectives as it were. For instance, the opera house seemed very small; rue de Rivoli, rue St. Honoré trivial and tawdry. The Tuileries seemed vulgar and old-fashioned; while the Luxemburg had an unremembered magnificence. For some reason, Ste. Sulpice loomed imposing, while the Winged Victory was little and delicate. Seen in the fog of a warm April evening, its top invisible and its great straddle misty over the traffic, the Eiffel Tower needed no excuse.

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4) As perfect for its ancient use as scythe handle or ox yoke, the oar-lock of the gondola looms crude and strong across the iridescent suavities of Venice.

5) The Paris taxis are mere conveyances, as in New York or Boston. London does a little better—there they are roomy, clean inside and sparkling without. But what is a meagre sliding roof compared with a great top that accordions down in back of you? No, no—gone the time when on a warm spring day in a great capital you could be, for a few minutes at least, a person of luxury.

6) At Chartres, we approached the cathedral well. On the left as we went up, we came on a small area of concrete and stone out of which rose a great hand holding a broken sword. On a quarter circle wall in back was carved the name of a mayor of Chartres, Hero of the Resistance, and two dates. No encomiums softened the facts; as no flowers prettied the concrete lake—nor was the hand "clothed in white samite." Much 20th century austerity is merely brutal, this made its point. Glancing up and beyond, we saw the spires of the cathedral.

7) I thought that Stendhal must have been very happy in the public gardens of Milano. There is a miniature zoo built like a village—two giraffes, one elephant, a splendid black panther and other exotica; a charming restaurant nearby. And the trees are luxuriant—elm, beech, deodar, gum, larch, cypress—planted in fours and at sufficient distance for each to grow to its perfection. I thought of him admiring them with one or another of his ladies. Then I realized that at the time he wanted to be known as Henri Beyle, Milanais—the zoo was very likely not there at all, nor the restaurant. The present arboreal splendor would have been in its infancy—supported by sticks, directed by guy ropes, puny spindles one by one on the great lawns.

I placed him more securely in the two art museums that were once private houses, private palaces. Though one of them has a very beautiful collection of mss.—Arabic etc.—and Leonardo's note-book, immense and cased in crystal with small brass pilasters—their principal charm is of dwellings. The baroque drip-drip fountain in the entrance hall of one, the library in the

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other, the courtyard garden brought home very clearly that though Americans are masters of comfort, luxury and elegance were invented in Europe and for the most part have stayed there.

It was pleasing to imagine one's self, dressed in the style of 1850—taffeta patterned with a muted Scots tartan—returning home from some social doing Via Marco di Marchi that is so suggestive of Georgetown (Georgetown D. C.), and sitting by the fountain for a few minutes before going upstairs to prepare for another social doing. A servant might say that M. Beyle had called—or that M. Beyle had gone upstairs to look at the little Guardi while he waited. One would sit by the slow fountain, confident of M. Beyle; confident it now seems of everything except, possibly, the state of one's emotions. What luxury—what psychic elegance.

8) "What are you thinking about?" I would say to KP as we drove from Carcassonne to Rouen. And she always answered, "I am admiring the sky." And surely, except for Arizona, there is none more beautiful and various.

9) For some reason, English little carving—tops of columns, choir stalls, etc.—is much easier to see than the French. It may be that in the French cathedrals your eye is usually pulled up to the windows. It may be that the English so often used motifs from what was growing roundabout. I recall an abstraction of cow lilies in Christ's church. Or, maybe, the English dust oftener.

Their architectural genius seems to have concerned itself primarily with dwellings. Salisbury Cathedral is a blown up country house, Exeter a castle. And they litter the insides of their churches with so many flowers, flags, plaques, statues that the effect is again of a house. I didn't see Ely, and there is always Canterbury. Worcester, however, is royal rather than holy. Perhaps it was that gaudy Tudor tomb in it that suggested the uses of Macbeth.

10) Project for winter—an apartment in Paris or Milano.
Project for summer—a villa outside of Aix (en Provence) or Tours.

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11) We spent an hour wandering around a little village three miles outside of Blois where, thirty years ago, we had spent a summer of happy memory. Narrow roads, high stone walls, the Loire nearby—except for a new post-office, the village had not changed at all. We were looking for Madame who had run her international family with such tact and charm. At last we tracked her down but, and after all the trouble gone to, did not knock. She had moved and we realized that it was not she but the house we wanted; the house with the long table set for fifteen twice a day, with the long glass doors giving onto wide steps that in turn led into a gravelly garden.

We were looking for Madame and her kindly husband and their son on vacation from St. Cyr, for the two young men from Cambridge (Eng.), for Sait and Rajah who barely spoke to each other since one was Mohammedan and the other Hindu, for the two American girls. We were looking for KP and myself and the little sister of thirty years ago.

Such summers were supposed to be educational. And it's true that one of the Cambridge boys (the one with the Mercedes), the Mohammedan and myself visited every chateau and church within a radius of fifty miles. But of those sights, I remembered very very little. What I did recall, and vividly, was the charm of the drives; the jokes and gossip and arguments of Sait, Bacon and myself as we sat at one or another café ordering respectively limonade, beer and cointreau.

These summers were also supposed to further international understanding—the idea being that you would never want to kill anybody with whom you had lived in amity. The idea being that a summer of amusement and the easy friendship of youth could outweigh twenty years of school and parental indoctrination. Yet, it never seemed likely that, no matter how many young Englishmen he had seen at his mother's house, Jean would ever pardon the English for the German break-through in '39. Nor could I see that a summer spent under the same roof in France had made for much understanding between Sait and Rajah —at most, they might prefer not to shoot each other personally. I should suppose that the truth of such a notion had been finally demolished when it was found how the German students had used their friendly, familial vacations in Norway.

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Of course, we like to think that only Germans would be capable of such outstanding perfidy.

12) Subtract, subtract—you sit Place Masséna in Nice and by subtracting people, automobiles, motor scooters, people, by subtracting your knowledge of staring white apartment houses and villas that have unmoulded the surrounding hills (even as at San Francisco, at Santa Fe) you may, with difficulty I admit, arrive at a picture of Nice as it charmed our grandfathers.

The low rosy buildings with their arcades were a suitable frame for top-hatted gentlemen, gallooned navy officers, boaed ladies and plumed landaus. The background was precise and small—an adorable opera house (a miniature of La Scala), the market, the gardens and the absurd Casino Jetée Promenade. This last was lugged off by the Germans for use as iron during their recent incursion. But in the old days, it was loved by Matisse and others much as Washingtonians loved the old War, State and Navy building. And even now, all through Nice, you come on a rosy or lemon-colored dwelling, often with a fresco under the eaves, often with a wrought-iron balcony, and understand once again why our ancestors asked for nothing better.

13) They say that Ireland is green. They never go on to say that, at least from County Wicklow West, it is black green of ivy, euonymous, rhododendron; and that at Galway the Aran islands rear their own black mass of desolation. They never say that the small trees are stifled by the black green ivy, the tall by black rooks. They never record that even the bright and spring-time green of grass with lambs and sunshine is of an infinite mournfulness.

None of which prevents Ireland from being one of the few countries I would wish to go back to.

14) For the chateaux, I offered KP "son et lumière." No, said she, I will take moon-light—and quiet, please.

15) In Stratford, years ago, KP and I took lodgings with two pleasantly decaying gentlewomen. In the morning, we would row on the Avon where were two swans and not much else. In the

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afternoon or evening, or both as suited us, we would go to a Shakespeare play. In the afternoon, John Laurie might play the *Twelfth Night* fool, Hamlet the same night. The last time I saw him, he was doing a bit part in Disney's *Treasure Island*.

Stratford now has thirty swans, innumerable boats, a fine theatre and eminent actors. Unless you've planned six months ahead, no tickets are obtainable, no housing; in any case, no parking, no quiet.

The closest we came to the old theater-going was to see *Love's Labor's Lost* in the Fellows' garden of Merton College. There was one small bleacher for the audience. The scenery was a tree and some bushes. It started by sunset and ended by spotlight. The play is a long and delightful joke and the production was the same, though I could have stood a little less Gilbert and Sullivan emphasis. But it was carefully done and very very charming.

We had recently, in the crypt at Chartres, come on a 20th century Sir Nathaniel. Ostentatiously oblivious of the fifteen other tourists, he switched his skirts and knelt, forehead on hand, elbow on chancel rail, before the black madonna. S's seemed the more agreeable character—but the prissiness was the same and wonderfully reproduced at Oxford.

16) It is frequently said that, left to himself, the common man would never start a war. Left to himself he does seem, however, to quarrel and feud with his neighbors to the full extent of his single, unorganized ability. Nor has he generally any idea of doing his little best to prevent wars by extension of charity, understanding or admiration to his neighbors across any given border. An Englishman never lets slip the chance for a crack at the Irish; his dislike of the French is total. The French detest the Germans, despise the Italians. And R. summed up their attitude towards the English when she announced that the only thing to be said for them is that they are kind to animals. She always characterized Americans as "bon enfant"—an erroneous (as well she knew) but charitable cover for our indiscipline and exaggeration that so affront the French.

17) One afternoon we drove East out of Aix. We passed a small river where people were fishing and picnicking. Then the

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river either went away or became a hidden brook and we were riding above a tree-covered ravine, opposite a Cézanne hill—perhaps Mont St. Benedict. Suddenly, below us, athwart the ravine and facing up and down it, appeared what looked to be a Renaissance chateau-mansion, very large, flanked on the four corners by much older round towers. The grounds were lawned and terraced, with cypress tress massed here and there. And the westing sun shone down the ravine, gilding the windows, whitening the steps and balustrade. It was one of three houses I have ever seen that I would like to own. Chateau de Vauvenargues—owned by Picasso.

He must have come on it as we did; and he was able to buy it, he having realized his excellent ambition "to live like a poor man with a great deal of money." Yet, for a painter to live under that hill would demand, I should think, either great humility or a great ego.

Compared with Vauvenargues, Cézanne's villa on the North side of town shows mediocre indeed. Inside he is represented only by an old shepherd's cloak, an old hat and a torn picture. "He was very fond of his mother, wasn't he?" I asked the caretaker. "She was the only one who interested herself in his work," she answered. Picasso has of course become, as one of his girls put it on leaving him, "a public monument" during his lifetime.

18) Stonehenge appears very little, almost delicate alone on the great high Salisbury plain, and is further dwarfed by the enormous sky. The mystery is hard to get at (and one is not helped by youthful archaeologists digging at a plinth). And yet you wonder, and listen as for one of the early frail speeches of man that is still whispering about there. We might have wondered to more point if KP and I didn't share an aversion to information and the sources of. As it is, we wonder, and wander, and go on off.

19) With all its faults, our modern housing is light and airy. Its fragility makes no claim to permanence, no claim to being worthy of permanence. If it has no tradition of nobility, it has none of gloom, either. In England, Ireland, France, the tradition of the peasant cottage is, if renewed to sanitation and convenience, renewed also to heaviness, ugliness. And, in a more expensive

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bracket, California has nothing more hideous to show than the vulgar villas that line the shore from St. Tropez to Cannes.

20) In the brochure, Barrès is quoted as saying that Le Puy is the strangest town in France. And I should think he might be right.

It is now a county seat, the big town for a farming countryside, a Keene, N. H. But it has a history of madness. It is like an old tale of a talented, uneducated girl on an isolated farm who sees visions, performs remarkable antics, is locked up for a while—then emerges and marries a decent young farmer of the neighborhood. Henceforth she concentrates her energies on planting and harvesting, and takes good care not to brood on the past. Yet, as our own friends back from Riggs or McClain show off the woodcarving or weaving they did in the occupational therapy department, she keeps around her the objects that she elaborated during her period of possession. Though they will all take pains never to reach those rather mild heights of art again, they yet, and wisely, respect and take pride in what their souls did all unbeknownst in their great struggle.

Approaching Le Puy from Vichy, you come down through sensational countryside of mountains and forests. At one point you can see the Pyrénées. You pass Chaise Dieu, one of those great ships of churches. Most of them, Chartres, Bourges, St. Maximin ride at anchor on a plain; this juts over a valley as though just loosed from the ways. (Haven or threat in the old days? Probably both, and formidable as either.) After Chaise Dieu, between one hairpin curve and the next, you look out over the flat valley of the Haute Loire. First you see Perpignac, a stone village built on the top of a perpendicular, smooth-sided rise of a thousand yards, a quarter of a mountain, out of the flatness. Beyond, also on top of a glass mountain, is an abbey. Nearby, and only a trifle lower, but on an equally remarkable geological outbreak, stands a mammoth statute of the virgin. After all these, Le Puy looks safe and wonderfully ordinary; but only because the town that started equally high up beside its church has slid down and anchored the eminence to the plain. Le Puy has skirted and childrened the old asceticism. And when you glide down curve after curve, and finally lose sight of that contour map of madness, you enter a town where,

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on the left, the juke boxes are blaring out "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and, on the right in the central square, there is an exhibition of McCormick reapers, Allis-Chalmers balers, Frigidaires and G. E. stoves.

Of course, the trouble with Keene, N. H. is that it was never even geologically mad.

21) England, France, North Italy—you come back with a memory of trees, trees grown to their full maturity untormented by our ice and winds, our heat and droughts. Larches, poplars, beeches, oaks, hawthorns—it's as if you had never seen a real tree before—only papery imitations. I remarked to KP that I had not remembered the trees in the Luxemburg as so impressive. She reminded me that they had had thirty temperate years in which to grow.

22) The French have a delightful method for making new words: *paille*—straw: *pailleton*—the pretty straw cap for bottles. *Glace*—ice: *glaçon*—ice-cube. They have been at this for a long time—as *feuille*—leaf: *feuilleton*—pamphlet.

23) Because of some odd bigotry, I had for a long while been offended by Marianne Moore's "Spenser's Ireland" and by Elizabeth Bishop's "The Imaginary Iceberg." It seemed, if I can reason about so unreasonable a prejudice, that actual Ireland, an actual iceberg would be quite enough to handle and could only be cheapened by playing Let's Pretend with them. If I still find Miss Moore's Ireland unsatisfactory even as a literary game—in the case of the iceberg the story is a little different.

When word went round the ship that there were icebergs in the vicinity, though KP could think only of the *Titanic*, I was agog to see a wonder of the world, something in a class with Grand Canyon, whales, Mt. Everest. But instead of towering ice, a majestically floating mountain—there, bright in the afternoon sun crouched a small Bactrian camel, carved out of ice, out of water ice, the kind you eat. And off its rear hump was falling, of all things, a howdah. It was as if that day the Lord had elected to play chef and had thought up this kitchen joke for the delectation of the first-class passengers. It was indeed a wonder—but aestheti-

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cally and emotionally strictly *nuit de gala.* So—with that my real, my actual iceberg, I bow to Miss Bishop's imagination.

24) The chapel in Vence that Matisse designed and decorated is not extravagant in any way. It is a recognizable and charming chapel. The little fort in Antibes where Picasso houses his fauns has not been altered. Even Cocteau's chapel at Villefranche, if a little more than conventional yet well short of inspired on the inside is, on the outside, a modest, proper little edifice. Very different the Léger museum, so near all these on top of a hill in Biot. It is a huge, harsh rectangle topped by a crude mosaic in Coney Island colors, an affront to the countryside of olive trees and strawberries, to the low-lying houses. Yet, what I take to be Léger's house next door is delightful. It appears quite old and, at the time of our visit, they were planting ancient olive trees in front of it. So, no doubt, another year it will be even more pleasing. But nothing short of total destruction will retrieve the arrogance of the museum.

25) "We always get an interesting view from our room," I remarked. To which KP replied, "I think it's that we are interested."

The truth of the matter is that our windows made pictures of whatever was outside. They opened down the middle and, with various and always pleasing proportions, were high rather than wide. So, a hillside in Vallauris, the port of St. Tropez, a garden in Paris was contained, bound, presented as it were.

One could argue that, as much as science, windows were responsible for the fascination that perspective held for the Renaissance artists. And the history of Cubism would be bereft indeed without them. It is the casement that opens on faery lands. Not the cross-barred, mean guillotine that, as Corbusier remarked, we use for every occasion—in New England even for churches.

26) A northerly wind lifts the taint of cuteness from Rye. It reminds you that when the houses were being built they were modern and practical.

27) "I am a Venetian," said the old man on the train, "but I do not find Venice beautiful."

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"And I am an American," I answered, "and do so find it." There seemed at the moment no other way to finish the exchange politely. And it was not quite a lie, for Venice is very beautiful. Only now, instead of being uplifted by its beauty, I am made mournful. Perhaps I suffer from the utilitarianism peculiar to those involved with the arts; what I can't use, I can't see—or, if I do see and still can't use, then I dislike. (KP once handed W., a painter, a particularly lovely rose. "All right," he exploded, "it's beautiful—what do you want me to do about it?")

It is, in late June, extremely difficult to see Venice because it is so full of people; mostly Germans, one to a camera. We elbowed our way from the Rialto to San Marco. And the little astonishing work of art set catty-cornered on the plaza still supplies its special frisson. But the shock of pleasure passes as soon as registered, and is at any rate unwelcome. As if one should suddenly encounter a truly discarded lover—and long gone the delights of Venice.

"But, in Venice, you should walk," exclaims the connoisseur. We did walk—and I would give a great deal not to have seen the dark, small, perfect campi—so perfect and so empty that they make you think of many other beautiful things made and hidden away where they are never seen and that share the campi's terrible loneliness, and also inflict it.

So—I followed a little with KP when she suddenly remarked, "The only solution for Venice is to drain the canals."

28) You don't read much now about the immensity of the ocean, yet it is still very very big. On both journeys, our ship lay to for a few hours so that a sailor from a freighter might be treated by our doctor. Close-up, a life-boat seems quite large; but, alone on the ocean, a life-boat is extremely small. It bobs up, bobs down; the little oars go in, go out; so small, so slow, so fragile, there seems scant hope of the boat arriving anywhere.

Yet, finally, the stretch of sea around is not so terrifying as thought of the depths beneath. At that apprehension our own boat dwindled and seemed no more likely than the toy we were watching to arrive anywhere. This fear is not rational—you can drown in very shallow water. I suppose it comes from imagining the alien element you would have to sink through for so long

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before arriving—safe, if dead—onto something like land, the dear familiar solid.

29) Visited on the same day as Stonehenge, Bath appeared considerably more barbarous. From a narrow valley, it rises up a hill in circles of masonry shaped like houses. There is only one shape and it is multiplied in curved belts of twenty, thirty to a unit. As KP said, a gigantic penal colony. That, or a troglodytic nightmare. My basic dislike of Jane Austen seemed somewhat justified when I thought of how at home she made herself here. It has been said that Bath is more Roman than Rome; that implies a Rome built entirely of demi-coliseums.

30) Some art book mentions the gaiety of Seurat's *La Grande Jatte*. And there is no doubt that its subject is cheerful enough. So is that of his *Les Baigneurs,* and the painting itself is white and tan and curved and sunny. But the two remain in my mind as among the most mournful pictures I have ever seen.

31) There are certain pious frauds among the sights. The landlord at Gort informed us that Thor Ballylee is indeed Yeats's tower; but that Y. spent most of his time at Coole, within pleasant walking distance. Where Daudet really lived was in a chateau nearby his famous wind-mill, and he wrote the *Letters* in Paris. Similarly, Petrarch spent only a few autumn weeks at Vaucluse. Foolish, of course, to laugh since all of these are proof of the power of intensity to make do for time.

Battle Abbey near Hastings isn't even piously fraudulent. You pay to enter the walls and find merely the grass grown site of the Abbey and learn that the battle took place some miles away. And the American chapel in St. Paul's is no more than a niche behind the altar.

32) Of all the visitors' books, we signed only the one at Trinity College, Dublin. There it seemed somehow a privilege, an honor.

33) You arrive at St. Tropez, get a fine room on the harbor where you can see the yachts coming and going—wonderful yachts. You can see the sports cars and the people. The harbor is lovely,

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the mountains beyond are beautiful. In the evening, the café sitters toss francs to a French boy with a guitar who is singing American songs, they toss even more francs to an American boy doing the same. All is charm, movement and a view. You think you could stay a month and by noon the next day are impatient to be gone.

I suppose it's that, though as a good American I loathe work, I like to be where work is going on. Also, I am sadly out of place among the youthful, the beautiful, the rich.

34) The French highway garages are a complete and often improved transplantal of our own. They don't even shut between twelve and two.

In England, tired of discommodious 16th Century living and shabby 19th, we were delighted to come on a motel. "Just like Kansas City," KP breathed happily—who, at home, has never expressed an affection for Kansas City or motels, either.

Imitation is not quite total, however. The French have not learned to check oil, water, tires with any degree of alacrity. They seem to think that as a presumably intelligent person, the owner at any rate of a valuable item, you should yourself know their condition. The English carry their improvisation so far that they don't care to send over tea. It wasn't in the blue-print.

It was interesting to go from our wall-to-wall carpeting, TV, cocktail table, dressing room and separate bath—from, in short, our really splendid motel—to a pretty little inn nearby that a young couple had just spent a great deal of money and effort to modernize and refresh. Even after seeing a 16th century alley where Prince Philip (in the 20th century) used to bowl, I was still not convinced that one bathroom would do for five or six rooms. I mentioned our motel. "O, yes," said the young woman, "the man who lent us the money suggested that we had plenty of space and would do better to build one. But my husband wouldn't hear of it. He wants to keep everything as near the old as possible and we think people will prefer it that way."

Well, Chippenham and its environs is not a prime tourist center and it is quite believable that an English clientèle can still prefer one bathroom to six bedrooms; provided, of course, they get Prince Philip's childhood thrown in.

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35) How far can restoration go before the object restored becomes else, if not different?

36) Rouen was re-building, building more. After weeks of antiquities, I found simply beautiful the twelve cranes at rest against the evening sky. I welcomed them—as I couldn't welcome the scaffolding on the dim, rain-furrowed, time-dirtied, also bombed cathedral. Strong yet delicate, great birds building nests, the cranes spoke of the future, therefore of hope and confidence. Their use and purpose were clear; whilst those of the cathedral, both present and future, were uncertain and ambiguous. I kept wondering how much of the past we should hold on to; whether it is really good to pour those thousands of francs and pounds into memorials to our ancestors and their faith. It seemed that, ideally, we should be so busy making new beauties that the old would crumble almost without our noticing. Ideally, perhaps—but since we are clearly not so occupied, perhaps we are wise to shore up our inheritance.

Almost every museum and cloister is lined with gravestones and tops of columns of undeniable antiquity and questionable value. The caretakers are afraid or just don't want to throw them away. So there they sit, hand-made, collecting dirt, an annoyance to the visitor as they catch the eye to no purpose. They could be given to house-holders to put in their gardens or incorporated into walls—as one puts old horses out to graze. Otherwise, like our own oil barrels, cars and tin cans and albeit far more modestly and winningly, they must join the mounting quantities of human detritus for which there is no easy disposal.

37) Before travelling, one should sow the ground with friends.

38) Some of the prettiest sounds of Europe are of bells, also some of the ugliest. Of these last was a certain clang-glang that broke out in Dublin every twenty minutes or so. Nines, tines, complines, co-sines—at any rate, at every rate they clattered and raged. In Rye, too, was a churchly racket that was extremely disagreeable.

Very different the bell of the caserne in Fontainebleau —a musical slight nudge on the hour and half hour. How should

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an Army bell be so tranquil and seductive? Far more than the palace, than the gardens even, it suggested a sweetness of the old régime.

In Calais is a wonderful little bell that plays an almost tune. It is what you would want for a child's music box, what you have never heard on one, nor will hear. But even for the pleasure of hearing it again, I wouldn't return to Calais.

39) To drive through France is to drive through pictures. The forest south of Tours opens into glades for Manet and Renoir. The sad villages North and West seem to have been left there by Millet. Around Arles, the cypress trees are mostly sentinel and contained, yet occasionally a green flame flares out as Van Gogh recorded. And the spic and span oil boats on the Seine at Rouen should go under his bridge. At Barsac, to taste the wine, we entered a large dim empty room, grateful retreat from a hot Sunday. At a huge polished circle of a table, some distance from ours, the patron played cards with his little boy. We saw his portrait by Cézanne in the Courtauld collection. He was again playing cards, this time at a small table and with a grown-up.

The country around Aix simply bristles with Mt. St. Victoires; while the pine-covered mountains below Le Puy are to be found in Théodore Rousseau and how many other romantics.

In Rouen, dim and far off in the twilight, a prostitute stood in classic pose. The atmosphere was of Daumier—but she seemed too young and pretty. As I wondered, she turned to help a friend remove a table-cloth, laughed, said something and then resumed her stance—pure cinema; director, John Ford.

There are many many pictures either unsigned or whose painters I do not know. I wish I knew who had done the square stone houses of the Camargue, far separated, approached by one straight lane, and sheltered by umbrella pines that look as if shaped by careful shears—shut up for the most part and very lonely. And I wish I knew of someone who had painted the Loire with its sand banks and willow trees and given it the quality that makes for happiness when you see it. The Loire near Tours.

40) It often seemed that European travel would be impossible were it not for Penguin books in general and for authors A.

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Huxley and E. Waugh in particular. And woe betide the unfortunate who faces an English week-end without the *New Statesman* and *Times Literary Supplement.*

41) Thirty years ago, my first painting experience and enthusiasm (if I leave out The Helping Hand at the Corcoran) was the Pre-Raphaelites. These were soon discarded for Botticelli (of the *Primavera*), Leonardo, Bellini and, by way of contrast I suppose, Mantegna.

Today I come up with La Tour, Seurat and again Mantegna and Botticelli (the last so much stranger, tougher, more questionable and various than I used to realize). Also, thanks to the great new museum in Paris, Pissarro and Vuillard suddenly came through. Thanks also to it, I saw the brilliant and shiny *Mandolin Player* of Picasso. Certainly, there is nothing like ignorance to produce eclecticism.

New pictures are wonderfully bright and close to what the painter just this minute had in mind. They speak our language. I think it was Mallarmé who said, Only the new is beautiful.

42) One of the enormous courtyards of the Castello Sforza in Milano is given over to the Fashion rose—about the most delicate, sophisticated and lovely of the modern polyanthas. At first, they seemed of the utmost incongruence under those wicked old battlements. Then I thought that though his soldiery might have been hard on them, Sforza himself, or themselves, would probably have delighted in them. After all, most military establishments are carefully flowered, here usually with canna. My great-grandfather, the Brigadier's bitterest complaint about the Civil War was that he had had to leave his roses to perish in Annapolis while he was fighting it out at Harper's Ferry.

43) In all art, I think it is only the educated, the trained who can appreciate the second grade (second often only by comparison with the very great) or the "interesting," the off-beat. Perfection in kind is recognized and rejoiced in by very ignorant people. As witness the ill-educated thousands who have fed on Shakespeare and the Bible. As witness the happiness, the total satisfaction such groping travellers as KP and myself experienced when we saw the cathedral at Chartres.

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44) I explained to R. about the Guggenheim, the Ford and other Foundations that enable people like myself to travel. "Ah," she said sadly, "we have many wealthy people in France, but they don't do things like that with their money."

45) The shock of new against old sparks enjoyment of both —as the farm equipment at the foot of Le Puy Cathedral.

At Chartres, an olive green sports car made an Admiral's sweep about the square and came to rest in front of the North porch. When the occupants had got out and disappeared, everyone gathered round to inspect this more recent wonder. It had a long, excessively long, bullet-shaped hood; no chrome anywhere; gold-colored discs; no name. Bolder than the rest, I looked inside—two hand-loomed shawls on the almost non-existent seat; still no name. We agreed that it was a special job—possibly an old Duesenberg —and went back, refreshed, to the cathedral.

In Milano, old and new reciprocate at every turn. The beauty possible to commercialism is expressed in the Piazza dei Mercatori that has been charming since it was first built three or four hundred years ago. And expressed again, across town, in a wide modern arcade floored with green and white marble where a few small stores show magnificent guns, magnificent silks. The arcade is backed by a glass wall through which one sees a green lawn and old trees.

46) KP says the Loire is a woman river, whereas the Rhone is male. I say the Rhone is a devil.

47) *Never despise Liverpool.* It is the great memorial to 19th century mercantile England. Were it not so blatantly indestructible, I would say that it should be preserved under a glass bell as an object lesson for future generations.

48) England suffered so sensationally during the last war that we tend to forget the sufferings of the French, which went over into the moral quarter as well. R. spoke of the real hunger experienced everywhere, "but the most terrible," she said, and her whole body stiffened as at a never forgotten affront to every part of her, "the unforgivable was the deportations."

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49) In Arles and in St. Tropez are perfect little galleries waiting for pictures.

50) KP is right, the national flower of England should be the red geranium. It is everywhere. The most austere façade betrayed by boxes of them.

It is as though at one time the English had understood bareness but, inventors as they were of the 19th Century, they had more than other people to embrace its faults. So everything was made cosy.

51) On the train, the conductor sat down with us and he and I chattered happily for twenty minutes. He spoke only Italian; I had only the few words I could recall from reading Dante with a trot and from a tourist vocabulary, all thirty years unused. When he left, a passenger came in. Besides his native Italian, he spoke Spanish learned during a sojourn in Venezuela, and German. But he was no old peasant in uniform to make do with what he had. Nor were either of us twenty to forget our dignity in favor of amusement. We had quite a lot to say to each other but, equals in class and impotence, we merely looked at each other across the lingual barrier; looked for quite a while in silent helpless understanding of our deficiencies. Finally, shrugging, he said, "Well, signora, the next stop is Verona," and went back to his compartment.

52) My distaste for Venice weighs on my mind like a discourtesy. Someday, I shall have to go back and make amends.

53) Why don't our U. S. street corners ever blaze with posters advertising art or flower shows?

54) I read in an obituary that Camus said, "The secret of Europe is that it has no desire to live." He must have said it a long time ago because a zest for living was one of the most winning aspects of France—summer of '59. The French were then touristing in droves. They were driving motor cars, motor bikes, buying electric machinery for their farms and houses, buying clothes and detergents. They were cheerful and agreeable.

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And what a pleasure to see our American goods at work for ease of living, for pleasure in. It sometimes seemed that if, in the light of history, that is all we accomplish it will have been an odd destiny but not entirely ignoble.

55) Some of my ignorances were inexplicable—as, coming on Lamb House in Rye, I needed the plaque on it to inform me that James had lived there for eighteen years. Then, of course, I remembered—knew from his descriptions the white room where he worked—and now could add the view over the marshes to the channel. A Good Place—odd that his fictional one should have turned into a vulgarized Yaddo.

We did search for Thor Ballylee—and it took a good bit of finding. Up a muddy road, I said to a farmer, "Your famous poet, William Yeats, lived near here—can you tell me where?" He simply laughed at me, agreeably enough, then called his wife, repeated my question verbatim and they both laughed as if, in my witlessness, I were a pure pleasure to behold. At that moment, their little girl arrived back from school and she was able to direct me. (Compare the old wino on the corner in Carcassonne who, seeing our car approach tentatively, jerked his thumb towards the street that led to the Cité—as well he knew the one that we were looking for.)

Found, Thor Ballylee is quite moving, and the stone carved dedication is legible. The tower is very small (but bigger than Jeffers'—it was, after all, a fortress) and very old. It is used now to house farm implements. Yet Robartes and Ahearn still stand above the dark and violent stream that surrounds it and then, like its late owner, goes underground to re-appear at Coole.

56) When KP would mention the enormous distances in the U. S., people would stiffen. They thought she was boasting whereas she was only trying to express a difference. And indeed, Europe's smallness is as impressive as its age. They go together—as grandmothers are small. I speak, of course, of the Europe we most of us go to see, our cultural grandmother.

Those little dark centres of human friction are receding like old stars. They diminish like the centre of a whirlpool as the waters spread farther out around it and life becomes more dilute,

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more open—we hope more sunny. It is strange to think that once gone, these concentrations of effort will never be repeated. And though we have never tried or wished to be like our grandmothers, we regret that our own grandchildren will never know their especial values. It is hard to feel ourselves and our doings suited to that revered relationship.

I should like to see Brasilia—see what the swarm does when it picks up in its entirety and goes to another site. Carcassonne, Aigues Mortes show what happens to the old hive. Though more recent than many other places and in good repair, they have become dreams. Even while we tread their stones we don't believe in them. And the people who built them, what they had in mind are more phantasmagoric than the Romans.

57) In the dark old Brera museum—Milano—after seemingly miles of Luini and then more Luini, to come bang onto Mantegna's *Cristo Morto* is an experience of some magnitude. Uncompromising in the midst of all that sweetness, of passionate, compassionate exactitude, pale colored—we flatter ourselves by calling it modern; yet how else to explain or describe the immediacy of its effect?

58) The faces of people in France are happy, in America not. The remark is so generalized as to sound fatuous even to my own ears. But whenever I summon the courage to utter it to a countryman who has recently been abroad, I receive a nod of agreement.

59) It is in Aix and Toulouse that you feel the proximity of Africa. The radios play a sort of Moorish jazz and you see young men and women whose beauty could never have sprung in Europe.

60) From Chester we made loops into northern Wales. You can't see the beaches for the trailers; but the interior is as handsome as any scenery anywhere—and very varied. The sunken lanes that are walled by ten feet of hawthorn and arched above by beech and oak give a feeling of antiquity that no structure conveys.

The Welsh villages seem much livelier than the English. You can imagine living in one.

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61) The French drive with an amateurish brilliance that reminds one of our own driving of thirty years ago, when driving was fun. Their courtesy is greater than any we ever arrived at; not a truck driver who doesn't go to infinite pains to get you by him. Their police are, when young, kindly nephews to advise; when old, genial colleagues in the automotive business.

City traffic is a matter of passionate engagement, again as it used to be with us. In Nice, especially, the girls handle their motor scooters in masterly fashion. With their full short skirts, high heels and pastel hair, plus their scintillating ability, they are adorable. "Filez, Madame," a pretty child cried in my ear when I was slow on a light. Her gaze was intent ahead, dedicated. I thought of her American opposite number. Relaxed, long-legged, humorous, "Move it or lose it, lady," she would have drawled.

62) The Irish talk like birds and make of English the prettiest language imaginable. Our tailor kept up a constant chirping while he fitted me, until I felt like a horse being groomed in one of those stories by Somerville and Ross.

Though I am sure that they are of unparalleled innocence, the young girls, as they twitter together, roll their eyes like junior Phèdres.

The children are beautiful. But the faces of the old are terrible, as if they had looked at some horror for too long without batting an eye.

In Dublin, looking for a bottle, we turned off O'Connell Street and mounted the steps of a former residence that now was advertising wines and spirits. We stumbled into a room perhaps ten feet square with ancient leather benches on two sides of it. The proprietor asked us please to sit and, in the deep gloom, three ancient chars and a wambling old man, each with a pint of Guinness in hand, made genial room for us. "Different places, different ways," I said as I mashed in between two old girls. "That's what I always say myself, my dear," one of them answered. And then, after a little, she added, "Well, you come in here after the day and there's nobody to notice when you go out." We had to wait a long time for our bottle and though there was no amount of chat we were, despite our wealth and foreignness, made welcome in their snuggery. The name of the room came from Dickens,

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as did the occupants. I wish I could believe that the tremendous pathos of the scene was equally fictional.

63) I should suppose that in almost any other country you would miss that quick bright application of intelligence to a question asked that is almost the rule in France. The question may be as banal as where is such and such a street; but the joy of answering and that lights up the whole person is the joy of knowledge shared. It seemed that nobody in France asked anything better than to go three or four blocks out of the way for the pleasure of such bestowal. To order a meal there is to take part in a play. The play may, rarely, be unpleasant, but it is never routine. This constant liveliness is tiring for the stranger, but it gives value to existence going on from moment to moment. It gives meaning to the words "society" and "social scene." And prevents boredom.

I don't think the Latins know our word, boredom. Their "ennui" is an active suffering, "le terrible ennui" of Baudelaire. A. approaches it when he says, "I ached with boredom." But for the typical of us, it is a foggy, quiescent condition of the soul and body. It attracts no adjectives.

64) Of Toulouse, the guidebook remarks that after the Romans went, communications broke down completely with the result that when it had used up its supply of imported stone the city was forced to build with its native brick. At the time, lack of stone must have seemed rather unimportant beside more humane results of sudden isolation. Indeed on thinking of the whole affair, one realizes that though the Romans perpetrated grave wrongs in their coming, their going must have been disastrous.

To get back to the brick—it becomes all you see in the city. The cathedral is built of it, the art museum. Brick painted white or yellow can be charming—as see our old U. S. Naval Establishments; faced with stone or plaster, it can become something else, as in Venice. Unpainted and in quantity, there is no material more drab and depressing. For example, certain towns in northern Maryland that, and also probably for lack of communications, churned up their native mud. And the famous houses of Salem are not exactly gay, nor graceful either.

But Toulouse is off-beat no matter how you look at it.

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Its main large church is most curiously put together—the nave and rose window are a whole aisle off center from the altar. Outside, the entrance is off-center from the window. Except for one forlorn drawing, the art gallery is entirely lacking in the Lautrecs one might have expected and that, for KP, illuminated the city a dozen years ago. They have all been removed to Albi—more fashionable, more inaccessible.

Thinking that we ought to find another section of town for strolling, coffee, aperitif, since the types around Place President Wilson seemed particularly crumby, I looked in the guide book only to find the Pl. P.W. is the center of elegance. And everywhere, the café life is as hectic as I have ever seen it—wildly crowded and with a constant din of radio and TV.

Clearly, one simply can't blame all of this on the Romans—and yet I do. It is as if their departure so many years ago had left Toulouse permanently out of kilter, desperate even under its febrile gaiety.

65) Driving through our South-West, I used often to wish that I were a geologist or archaeologist—wished, in short, for a knowledge that would give form to my looking. In France I wished, and for the same reason, that I were an architect or art historian.

You plan to travel? Put knowledge in thy purse.

66) In spring, in Provence, it is the roses that you see. Around filling stations, in poor door-yards, they fill the atmosphere with "rose light." And they are by no means old-fashioned roses—no Papa Cochet or General Jacquminot—but the latest hybrid teas. I have never anywhere seen them more beautiful.

As summer advances, it is the fountains for which one is grateful. In the smallest village square, the cold water pours out fresh from the Alps. People wash in these fountains, children sail boats in them, the water is carried in bottles into the nearby houses. They cause a most marvelous thirst and we finally carried a little cup handy in the glove box.

67) In Aix, Good King René in royal robe and crown (much mossed) surveys parked cars and not much else—as does

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frock-coated Mistral in Arles. Though so separated by the years in this life, they share the same past—the past that ended in 1914. Both would be equally well replaced by a statue of Mme. Curie or, if we should be so lucky, by one of Good Dag Hammerskjold.

68) For all its charm, Milano has a teutonic orderliness that, if it makes for convenience, makes also for a certain unease. It is clean to put any American city to shame. Yet, it seemed sad that the elderly, neatly-dressed man whom we watched from our hotel window should have had to wait till midnight to scavenge cigarette butts.

Around the Cathedral, there is an invisible Texas fencing. In the square in front, you are the legitimate prey of peddlers of any light item from rosaries to dirty pictures. You are jostled, cajoled, harangued and badgered into buying same. One foot on the steps and a modern version of the old Sanctuary goes into effect and you find yourself in safety and quiet.

I gathered, with my usual slowness, that when the poor-poor make a foray they are not allowed to speak. One shawled, thin child banged into me hard—and the Galleria was not that crowded—but, as I was only astonished, she went off immediately. Profiting by a night's reflection, the next day I offered money to some musicians and found that, if not allowed to say Please, the poor-poor are at least permitted to say Thank-you with full freedom.

69) I think often, and with a not misplaced gratitude, of all the people who served us, and served so well. I think of them with a little sadness since though they came to us one by one in five short months and so I can remember each one almost—for them, agreeable as we might have been, we were inevitably lost among the thousands.

I think of the young man of all work at Vallauris with whom I got into a discussion of the correct pronunciation of "calme."

I think especially of the very young ones being brought up in the hotel business. From Dublin to Milano—quick, graceful, affable. You can say that they were playing for tips—but, so young, they were still practising their plays and to that extent were amateurs, ingenuous.

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And how else but by money (given secretly so that grown-ups wouldn't grab it from him) could I reward or praise the little boy at Blaye who made such valiant conversation and was at the same time so childishly delighted when I told him to get into the new Peugeot and drive with me to the garage!

Equally, no money could be thought of in connection with the beautiful blonde child-housekeeper in the hotel at Galway. For her, I could only pray for a decent husband.

70) The natives tend to scorn Hyde Park—but that must be because they think only of its summer aspect of open air dormitory and ball park.

It has (blessedly for one tired of the English mania) no flowers. And, on a warm May evening, as one walks under a double alley of great trees, with the mist rising over the meadows on one side and the lights from the Dorchester and the traffic on the other, it becomes royal once again.

71) In the court of St. John's college, Oxford, the roofs are decorated with carved stone creatures. They are not gargoyles, or of any use—simply nasty little thoughts most ingeniously expressed. You also find them on the arm rests of the choir stalls in Chester. They would be banned from any modern church or college as not only unfunctional but unsuitable (as would the dancing girl of Chartres, and she is lovely). As you think of it, there is a kind of innocence in expressing nastiness by animals. Leonardo's note-book is crammed with vile, really loathsome creatures that are half-human. And in our century, we have arrived at expressing all such thoughts in wholly human terms.

72) The Palais des Arts Modernes, the Mellon Gallery, to say nothing of older mausoleums, are magnificent and necessary. But for layman pleasure in picture viewing, there is nothing like a made-over dwelling. The Courtauld in London, the Phillips in Washington—in those you are for a moment at home and the pictures enter your total rather than your officially aesthetic existence.

73) They still manage just about everything better in France—but how can anyone, a writer especially, live for long outside of the country of his language?

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WILLIAM DICKEY

Interpreter's House

> . . . wherefore take good heed to what I have shewed thee, and bear well in thy mind what thou hast seen; lest in thy Journey, thou meet with some that pretend to lead thee right, but their way goes down to death.
>
> —*The Pilgrim's Progress*

I

A locust like a thin noise toward the day,
The poise of the moment of morning on its wing,
Tells its slant scale, and in the burnished cry

Says that it will be hot, scalds everything,
The tense heat in the pines, the unmoving shore,
The sand too hot and separate to cling

Or hold the print of who you were before.
This burring speck of voice hot in the grass
Cherishes knowledge of the heretofore,

The knowledge that your vision will not pass
Wholly through prisms to your own defeat,
Or blur to water in the looking-glass.

II

But the shrill masters mesh inside the heat.
Their eyes like acts of mummified desire,
They shout the proclamation of defeat,

That worlds are empty, noisy, and for hire,
House of the senses empty, and the meat
Heavy on bones that hold no thread of fire.

Their voice is noise, the dull continuous beat
Of garbled messages along the wire,
Noise, noise along the nerve, the daily cheat,

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Daily contempt their pursing mouths require;
Their subtle fingers move along your fear,
Saying, be one with us, saying, admire.

III

Only in uttermost morning did you hear
The pure vibration of a single voice,
Flute of the solitary, mover sphere,

The narrow tightness of the locust's choice
When he was singing the sole song he can,
His piercing monody of good advice:

That it is bones of fire that form a man.
Inside the apparatus of the flesh
The skull's eye looked toward truth and looked the same

For torture of the body's endless rush
To end all sounds in purely bodily grace,
To take the consummation for the wish.

IV

The masters of illusion wake in ice
To the illusion that they cannot fail
To own again the day's blue precipice,

To clap you in your icy morning jail.
They sew the silver earphone to your ear,
And in your hand erect the silver flail

To move, to kill. Their memories appear
Taped on the silver screen across your eyes,
Saying, adore me, I am more than dear,

I am your mother, I am your surprise,
I am the lap you wished to nestle in,
The diamond growth that overclouds your eyes.

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V

The masters of illusion walk within
Their nettled cassocks to a charm of cold,
Saying, the most of destiny is sin,

Except that sin is old, and we are old.
Old hands hold violent magic, and will live
By blood like bread, in the untiring cold.

What our hands hold they have no need to give.
We give the things that anyone can own,
The wholesale smell, the bought recitative,

The cold-veined fragments of a tearing gown,
A tearing breast, and where our vigilants live,
We are the proper tiger of our town.

VI

White cane correct me, for I cannot strive.
The billboards eat my body and my head.
The makeshift part of me that is alive

Finds carrion smiling in my marriage bed.
The masters taught it bloody on their wheel
The masters fed it wholly on their bread.

And I am left to feel as the fools feel,
Blind in my sight, in my assumptions dead,
The rusted syntax of a mouth of steel,

A speech that is by sense unfrequented.
Statistics tell me what I feel I feel.
I am a closed statistic of the dead.

VII

Statistics march like stars upon their wheel.
The angry constellations swarm and leer.
Andromeda tells us what we cannot feel,

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Draco the music that we cannot hear.
The instruments will not give us safe return,
Show us the star by which we ought to steer,

But stars of priests and tyrants coldly burn,
That have with aging pride declined their heat,
Like the convenient sophistries we learn

In the usual hollow under the pulse beat,
In the hand's reaching, in the hand's return,
In the quiet part of us that smells defeat.

VIII

Only in uttermost morning is the sound
Single, intense, caught in its own delight.
To walk that morning, in the bright surround

Of flowers, birds, in the infinitude of light,
When the grave holy creatures touch the ground,
Knowing they are miraculous and right,

Hand touches hand in that gold trumpet sound,
To say the day star finds its perfect light.
We are the grave strict figures who surround

The masters of denial of the right,
Whose broken hands in their own hands will fail,
Who lose their eyes in the access of light.

IX

Love breaks the banner of the old entail.
Interpreter, lay tongue to this strict note.
From the defiance of the endmost jail

Lazarus stands; the song defines his throat,
Whose grave-cloths are the precious rot of heaven,
Whose love, that dead love, we described by rote.

But to the dead bones sometimes it is given
To stand in their whole innocence and say
By the skull's eye the imperfect flesh is riven,

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It is as it was, gently, on the first day,
When the single word of love came forth from heaven.
And in this world, the word did not go away.

X

The masters of illusion wake at dawn
To take the day they thought was their own thing.
Only the slight-voiced locust on the lawn

Cries, in this contest I am everything.
The first voice, but the voice that will go on,
Alters the sunlight with its burning wing.

Proteins, Carbohydrates, and Others

Increment, gain, increase—
My belly grows in peace
Fatter than Buddhas or
The heaviest emperor.

Increment of the self:
No Ghibelline or Guelph
Felt his self more intact
Than I, or more perfect.

Gain of the weighty word:
Ponderous and absurd
Analogies from Greece
Fatten my speech apace

And struggle to increase.
I struggle, in my grease,
Half man and half cold fat
To wear my weightiest hat,

To gain, and hold my gains:
My egg and gravy stains,
Like jewels in my crown,
My academic gown,

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My hair that duly parts,
My six reptilian hearts,
My simple murderer's hands
On which the live fat stands,

And by itself, my head,
Sluggish and amply fed,
Which thinks with glee of that
Ever-amassing fat.

Substance and self-respect.
I am of that good sect
Of which the Khan is weighed
In diamonds, then betrayed,

And if I talk to you,
Slowly, my voice like glue,
Shaking, my hands like tongues,
Breathing from heavy lungs,

You may know I will have
Your substance to my grave,
And will acquire your weight
To my edifice of hate

That is the only good.
Copper, nor brick, nor wood
Lie on my endless paunch
Like everlasting lunch,

But let them write for me
"He is as he would be,
Weighty," and set it down
In fat, substantial stone.

Increment, gain, increase—
What have we got but these?
What we have got we know.
My belly tells me so.

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JAMES MERRILL

The Day of the Eclipse

Summer, until today, burned thought
Away like dross, refined or stunned
Into a life mask golden blind
The face fixed upward with eyes shut;
On either lid a rose-red coin was put;

And upon water rapt and sheer
A single eye of fire held sway;
A single rower just off shore
Could sit becalmed day after day,
A world from oar to dripping oar;

While anyone who walked at noon
Upon the mirror of the tide's
Retreat, turned every drunken sun
His bare feet tarnished, to a stepping-stone,
Or, sped by glares from the banked pride

Of light at heel, put dunes between
Himself and town (the wharves, the saltbox inn,
One lamp above its door lit even
In sunshine, like a freethinker in heaven)
And came back with red skies beneath his skin.

Today is different. The sky pale,
The rower absent, is it warm or cool?
Up from the sound one thin pole
Totters beneath a sudden gull.
Its wing, folded, is hard to tell

From sky. The walker drops onto the beach
In a turmoil he still cannot define.
There is a lone, burned child to watch
Digging so furiously for fun
As to stir up a chaos into which

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They both might slip, their muscle yield
To something blinder and less skilled
Than maggots, and their boniness
Flex, fracture, effervesce,
Before the lacy vortex can be healed.

Turning to heaven for relief
He sees it happening. The world's dark half
Clears like a spring, a galaxy
Flows from its severed veins. And he,
He tries to give himself.

He rises, peers up through smoked glass.
A black pupil rimmed with fire
Peers back. Some thin clouds pass.
Afterwards, in the atmosphere
Of any dusk, he sits, depressed, unsure.

Here she is, pacing the dim pier,
The girl of whom he has been aware all summer
With her white face and short red hair.
He knows that she belongs to a far more
Exciting world, which soon will claim her.

Look! as the gull fades from its pole
She stiffens, unique caryatid
Of the invisible. A coal
Inhaled glows where her eyes bid
Grayness to overrun the whole

Dunescape she must undergo.
Then other far, blurred lights go on,
Causing an unseen buoy to moan.
He waits for the strange girl to follow
The gull into oblivion.

Some evenings he can watch her dine
Across a cellar's flames and murk.
Relaxed, convival over wine

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And looking beyond the fallen dark
To her next morning's work

Companionless in a skylit shack,
She has told the nodding waitress how to take
Gobbets of gray-blue clay, refine
Them to an eyelid, a jawline,
Circling the figure, stepping back

To judge it. She arrived in May
With someone dark and handsome to a fault
Who promptly left. Last night he heard her say
She would be fetched back soon. He felt
The need for many another day

Of radiance before the end.
He felt he had begun to understand
Those mounds of matter cold and blind
She loves, how even they respond
To the least pressure of a shaping hand.

LOUIS SIMPSON

The Riders Held Back

One morning, as we travelled in the fields
Of air and dew
With trumpets, and above the painted shields
The banners flew,

We came upon three ladies, wreathed in roses,
Where, hand in hand,
They danced—three slender, gentle, naked ladies,
All in a woodland.

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They'd been to the best schools in Italy;
Their legs were Greek,
Their collarbones, as fine as jewelry,
Their eyes, antique.

"Why do lambs skip and shepherds shout 'Ut hoy!'?
Why do you dance?"
Said one, "It is an intellectual joy,
The Renaissance.

"As do the stars in heaven, ruled by Three,
We twine and move.
It is the music of Astronomy,
Not men, we love.

"And as we dance, the beasts and flowers do;
The fields of wheat
Sway like our arms; the curving hills continue
The curves of our feet.

"Here Raphael comes to paint; the thrushes flute
To Petrarch's pen.
But Michael is not here, who carved the brute
Unfinished men."

They danced again, and on the mountain heights
There seemed to rise
Towers and ramparts glittering with lights,
Like Paradise.

How the bright morning passed, I cannot say.
We woke and found
The dancers gone; and heard, far, far away,
The trumpet sound.

We galloped to it. In the forest then
Banners and shields
Were strewn like leaves; and there were many slain
In the dark fields.

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In Sleep There Is a Tower

In sleep there is a tower
To which good fellows ride,
Each to his own desire;
The gate is open wide.
Here one-legged men are wanted
And beggars may embrace.
Here, here, O woman-haunted,
Here is your true love's face!

The heart's true occupation
Is thrilling to the fore.
We rise, a happy nation,
And throng the lighted door.
Heine, is this the music
You heard in Ilsenstein?
Are these the lips, Catullus?
Omar, is this the wine?

The demons in the middle
Go whirling, heel and spur.
Dwarfs play the horn and fiddle . . .
Dwarf drum, dwarf trumpeter.
Here businessmen with paunches
And there prim housewives prance,
While imps of the subconscious,
Stark naked, lead the dance.

Now shake a leg, lodge-brother!
Abigail, on your toes!
What we see in one another
The Devil only knows.
Embrace! For day is breaking;
And loves that seem so fair
Will fade, upon your waking,
As though they never were.

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The Redwoods

Mountains are moving, rivers
are hurrying. But we
are still.

We have the thoughts of giants—
clouds, and at night the stars.

And we have names—guttural, grotesque—
Hamet, Og—names with no syllables.

And perish, one by one, our roots
gnawed by the mice. And fall.

And are too slow for death, and change
to stone. Or else too quick,

like candles in a fire. Giants
are lonely. We have waited long

for someone. By our waiting, surely
there must be someone at whose touch

our boughs would bend; and hands
to gather us; a spirit

to whom we are light as the hawthorn tree.
O if there is a poet

let him come now! We stand at the Pacific
like great unmarried girls,

turning in our heads the stars and clouds,
considering whom to please.

Mountains are moving, rivers
are hurrying. But we
are still.

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CHARLES GULLANS

Return Voyage: 1955

For Donald Davie and C. P. Snow

1

Through many cities, continents, and races,
I have come home across the vexed Atlantic
To look with novel eyes on native faces.
With slow, fat bodies and their sleek, fast cars,
I could dislike them, now, repatriate,
I could despair. It is not hard to hate,
Nor is it hard to play the patriot:
Fools and their folly fill the public hour,
Glib in their loyalty and their despair.
But if I hate them, it would only be
Because I, too, am one, because I care.
Extremity, the national disease,
Is mine no less than theirs. The question, then,
Is who are they and what are they to me,
"The earth's new giant breed, the American,"
My separate and our joint identity.

2

What are we, now, who dominate an age?
A privileged enclave of the dying west
Amid a starving world, the spoliage
Of empires and of years; insensate power
That buys the weak allegiance of the weak
And to the hungry sells the superflux,
The insane abundance of our corn and wheat.
If wealth is much, the principle is more;
So I, a portion of that destiny,
Must be concerned; I care, so I must fear
Involvement in imperfect policy,
The bland deceit of patriots, whose pride
Is passionate confusion of the scope
Of moral empire with imperial power.

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I fear their judgment, and I fear their fear
To face the deep compulsions of the hour.

3

I will not swear allegiance to a power,
A boundary, an interest—these contain
No country that I know. But I will swear,
By our Fathers' dreams of studious polity,
A principled recalcitrance; a love
Allied to anger; and subversive faith.
I cannot love a power, though I approve
Its exercise or not; mere boundaries
Oblige in me no more than dull respect;
An interest less than common I despise:
To love unequally is a defect
Of love and reason. I have a world in mind
Like and unlike the country that I see.
And though our world yields to the form of hope,
The shape of thought, so slowly does it yield,
I cannot place the country I desire.

From Richard Hooker

Flesh of my being, shade disclosing light,
Most nearly perfect, but imperfect sight,

You that inform me with my principle,
First, last, and midst, whether for good or ill,

None can ignore you wholly though he would.
Innate, enduring measure of the good,

Sovereign in suasion, let me understand:
Teach me to use my left and my right hand,

So that all powers may through your service be
Instructed virtues, not your enemy;

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So intellect and learning may delight
Not in mere exercise, the show of right,

Nor the arrogant exclusion of their kind,
But in the impassioned interplay of mind

With purposes, of concept with perception.
That none be lost through passionate deception,

My heart, at last, teach me to regulate
To a slow love and slow, impartial hate.

After Analysis

Others can force me, I alone persuade,
By my own slender purposes am swayed,
Am the elector of my partial ends,
Choose the obliquities my heart intends,
Choose every chance on which my fall depends.

No one can injure me as I can, none
Betray me, hate me more, for I alone
Have loved myself with a sufficient pride:
My skills corroded and my art belied,
Deluded, vain, in everything I tried,

I was the image of a trembling beast.
Of all I trust, I trust myself the least—
I know the subtle foe attempting me:
I am my own, my only enemy.
And knowing this, I am my own at last,
Wholly possessing my disordered past.

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PAUL RAMSEY

A Leaf on a Great Tree

for R. M. G.

A leaf on a great tree falls,
No longer of the tree, gone
As a freak of the white wind
Which rides pale leaves heavenward
Quits, letting the leaves settle.

The departure keeps no account.
Think a little wildly of
The incredible storehouse
Where some say each sparrow's fall,
Leaffall, drop of blood, is kept.

Those who request only that
The great tree stand, that branches
Bear what they need to only
So long as the brief need holds,
Admonish our scattered tears.

For tears have continuance.
They too fall briefly, wildly,
And vanish, leaving behind
A motion of pure silence
It remains to account for.

Naming

1. I am a park where swings go
Up, down, and up and down till the noisy children tire.
Killing has visited me; silences grow
Where lovers in my thick fern fermented desire.
Peace is not my name. I have rarely seen such.
Even a little is too much.

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2. I am a stone cliff.
My sheer side is I,
The rest mere climb and bruise.
Who wears my simples on the sly?
Whoever cares to use them
Or to abuse them.
I grant you purchase if
Your pick-axe find its ledge on my rock face.
You may call it luck, or grace.

3. I am a small tree, my boughs black.
Winter pelts me with rain.
Something has stunted me and fed me with its lack
And left me other than rose or cedar.
Call it pain.
Yet I give in good light on a large meadow
Where the winds lift the whiteness of green rushes
And I in my blindness rejoice
Though my voice
Be but branches under strain.

Sestina

I wrote a poem and sent it to the Hudson,
They turned it down and printed a translation,
An essay on the Noh, a grave sestina,
And some scrubbed poems that smacked of academic.
God save the poem that breathes forth any passion
If one would seek in college for advancement.

Some magazines are useful for advancement.
PMLA can hardly beat the Hudson.
The critics and the scholars share a passion
(So fragile it would perish in translation)
For reconciliation academic,
Or so I claim who snipe in this sestina.

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The secret of the difficult sestina
Is that it's easy. If you seek advancement
And yet would be a poet, be academic,
And spend your days and nights upon the Hudson
To get a style that sounds like a translation
And faintly savors of a tidy passion.

But it is said they do allow for passion,
Are up-to-date as well as pro-sestina.
They sometimes choose (to balance a translation)
An off-beat tale or satire on advancement.
Transparent is this gambit of the Hudson
And somewhat more than slightly academic.

Even if one who mumbles "academic!"
Is unscrubbed, wretched, floundering in passion,
And cannot meet the standards of the Hudson,
He has his right to snarl in a sestina
At all the prim who butter for advancement.
The bread they butter has a foul translation.

Enough debasement. Truth survives translation;
True scholars' passion lifts the academic;
Good poets have sought out genuine advancement;
Advancement into truth was Milton's passion;
And Dante, terza rima or sestina,
Served God and man, though blandly flow the Hudson.

Envoy

Translation itself may serve a goodly passion.
The academic gave us the sestina.
Advancement may be noble. Good-bye, Hudson.

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O. MANDEL

Unabashed

My love answers my love;
  our two breasts link
and one same milk,
  each other, drink.

What are to me
  Chaos and Flood?
My love touches
  my only blood.

The cannon finds us two
  asleep, undressed,
like twin mild clouds
  together pressed.

No newscast tells the world
  its chemistry is changed
and by two flakes of joy
  the cosmos rearranged.

Month buries our day,
  year raises the stone,
and rubbing wind
  makes us unknown.

At the "Number Six" in Chelsea

Disinherited but dignified,
  alone to the right, the same to the left,
I sip my Italian espresso
  this tolerable night.

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Bandied my thirty years in Japan,
in Antwerp, Nebraska, New York,
I sip any nation, forced to be
modern, unclassifiable man.

This English I took like a thief:
Hebrew my line, Polish my father,
Belgian my birth, Yankee my stamp,
English my love: a nervous sieve.

Yet all received me, offered me
a chair, none ever mentioned
the absence of a face: what saved
my happiness was courtesy.

Toward London now my longing lies,
and yet I know, home is elsewhere
than anywhere: though my soul
is too small, my soul must suffice.

The Advantage of Trivia

Clever I have made a circle
and inside I stir my tea, ambition,
ladies, votes, and poetry,
and all my paltry erudition.

I keep as busy with my clutter
as a baby with his blocks,
I keep as busy as one
of all the yapping hunting dogs.

Keep busy is the rule of men
too shrewd to be too wise.
There is no horror in the air
but where we realize.

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The Atheist

My mind dwells perfectly on death's incommodation
and nothing safe. I hate noble literature
and all professional wisdom: whose scream is combed
and told to behave in drawing-rooms like an angel.

The night I opened Hell and saw Ugolino set
his teeth into Ruggieri's hair, I turned my head
away, but slow enough I caught a muddy grin,
and then the teeth hit bone and I was forced to look.

His hair bleeding (and Ugolino's upper lip
was pushed against the nose from biting) grinning
Ruggieri said: "Yet I am I"; and I crouched stunned.
There is no cruelty to match no God at all.

Me for the rectangular bed and humus
eternal coverlet, bone and beneath pain,
not even wishing someone drilled a hole and thrust
a tube in mercy to periscope some sky to me.

May my father and my mother die suddenly
and old, like lights switched off by accident, and not
be frightened. May I not dangle after my friends
alone to be shot like an only target in a square,

no one to hide behind and hope he will die first.
I am nervous and yet I would welcome a ghost.
I have minded my mind, which is glory, but why?
To dwell on death without hole and consolation.

Res Poetica

I am tired of the grapes and lilac
(nature, take me dumb)
of "mist lifting out of brown cattails"

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of winds' "contorted strength" of "pink rice
grains" for stars of "undinal vast belly"
of the sea, and all such annotations.
Nature, take me dumb:
the bees and leaves have been recited,
my own life must be run.

I am tired of the topic love
(woman, love me dumb)
of "willow eyelids" of "intense fragility"
twin breasts "cooing like doves under the eaves"
of thighs "like papal marble" of moans
for love's regrettable delinquencies.
Woman, love me dumb:
though eyes may be "deeper than roses,"
I am me and young.

ALAN ANSEN

Fatness

aleph

1. How comely glisten the rounded cheeks and the swelling thighs! Blessed the sinews, auspicious the tissues that prosper to the benediction of amplitude.

2. Rejoice, ye beholders, in the nutritive steaks and comforting sauces, the delights of the palate and the strength-giving proteins.

3. The chiming bowels give thanks to their Maker and broadcast the incense of life lived well.

4. Bear witness, O body in bloom, to the goodness of the Lord and to the wealthiness with which He endowed thee.

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5. The people dance in the streets, fulfilled with my fullness.

6. Just are the ways of God to man! A proof, let me communicate gladness.

7. In the day of my rising up, low I give thanks: Thou hast heaped up my treasure, Thou hast exalted my horn—to Thee be the glory.

8. Not for us alone, O Lord, not for us alone; but let Thy bounteousness extend to all: soften the hearts of the princes that they endue even the meanest, especially the meanest, with the fruits of benevolent earth.

9. I rest not from celebrating the goodness of the All-Highest: my heart never wearies in hymns of thanksgiving.

10. Grow to the height of blessing: there are giants on the face of the earth in these days.

beth

11. Stately and calm, the mature body serene studies quietness.

12. The due and regular refection soothes the stomach with punctual beauty.

13. Punctual too, the bowels' outpourings betoken the sanctity of the measured life.

14. Roseate repletion hallows my accomplished torso.

15. Solid in a world of solids, I exist a landmark to the more fluid.

16. Unshaken, I contemplate unmoved the variations of behavior.

17. My spirit, if it does not rejoice, it snoozes complacent.

18. Content you, turbulent minds, with the portion meted out to you: lest a worse thing befall.

19. Conform yourselves to the established rite: in a multitude of worships only the will is adored.

20. Peace! Peace! Let us imprecate peace on the living, the dead and the resting.

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gimel

21. An inert mass groans to its Creator: Can this dead fat live?

22. Shovel in the pork, the oils and the butters: so much the less for sneering starvelings.

23. Bowels, laboratories of decay, infect the unjudging air with the poison gases of your spiteful superfluity.

24. Sweaty flesh, gravid with itself, overlays my life.

25. Mine enemies hiss at me, a ridiculous monster, a laughable roadblock in the path of their impatience.

26. Their mockery I answer with my mightiest curse, my continued existence.

27. My vacuously frenzied spirit tears and rends in vain the meaty clogs of static adiposity.

28. Jacob, I lie immobilized in possession: why troublest thou thyself?

29. Beyond this bed and this trough is nothing: blind and deaf, I am conscious only of weight and pain.

30. Heaviness is all.

daleth

31. Let us fly then, my corpulent soul, to the hot lands, the black lands, the simple and starved lands,

32. Where adoring the woolly-haired natives proclaim the steatopygous and the beautiful one.

33. Up! Up and away!

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HOWARD NEMEROV

The First Point of Aries

After the morning of amazing rain
(How fiercely it fell, in slanting lines of light!)
A new breeze blew the clouds back to the hills,
And the huge day gloried in its gold and blue.

The road they walked was shoe-top deep in mud,
But the air was mild. And water of the spring,
The new, cold water, spread across the fields,
The running, the wind-rippled, the still-reflecting.

Life with remorseless joy possessed them then,
Compelling happiness beyond the power
Of prudence to refuse; perforce they gave
To splendor their impersonal consent.

What god could save them from this holy time?
The water, blinking in the sun's blue eye,
Watches them loiter on the road to death,
But stricken helpless at the heart with love.

Maiden with Orb and Planets

She stands now, shy among the destinies,
Daughter and mother of the silent crossings.
That is what beauty is, the petalled time
In a child's tomb, the basalt time that waits
In the Valley of the Kings, the swaying time
That smoothes the rivers through the summer nights
And polishes the stone and dulls the eye.
A china dynasty, the may fly's day,
Tremble to balance at her either hand,

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And her blood moves as the dark rivers move,
While all the sailing stars pass and return.
Her stillness makes the moment of the world
Strike once, and that is what beauty is,
To stand as Agamemnon's daughter stood,
Amid great armies waiting on the wind.

F. D. REEVE

To Richard, This Year

October. The trees are cold again.
The wind is scolding the mice in the attic.
The sun is like Clytemnestra's signal: the men
Are almost back from the thunder-hacking,
Knee-breaking, body-rotting war,
And you are not among them. The reeds
Are matted and twisted along the shore
Of the lake where the heroes came in from the boats
In heavy rubber boots, mud on their knees
And the song of a gypsy dead in their throats.
Your glove is lying by second base,
And the pillow you slept on hides your face
From all of us now. Poor, crazy boy,
Did you want to die in the middle of life
As if killed by a car, the broken toy
Our little girl cut up with a knife?
Maybe there is no sin in madness,
But even Cassandra was not believed:
So be dead, go hide your inhuman sadness,
Kill yourself really, and learn to grieve.

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BENJAMIN DE MOTT

Letter from the Classes

> Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively . . . the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds . . .

NINETY-SOME YEARS AGO, when Arnold's "Culture" delivered this command, the methodologists in the audience must have flipped. "Consider these people"—*how?* Following the School Inspector's example a researcher could ponder the published utterances of figures of *chutzpah* like Mr. Bright and Mr. Roebuck and Mrs. Gooch.[1] Or he could take to the streets and eavesdrop on the rank and file of the local gangs—Philistines, Barbarians, other rumblers. But in either case the stuff he assembled would be junk unless worked up in historical comparisons—and how were such comparisons to be made? Where were the old documents on which to base them? Who could believe that the records of yesteryear contained as much as a sneeze worth linking with the day-to-day talk of people at hand?

The problems suggested by these questions still exist, as goes without saying, but they have lately been decreasing in difficulty. Fifty years ago a Modern Language Association president, speaking on "Disrespect for Language," claimed that:

> Our daily utterance we cannot, of course, measure with that of yesterday . . . As to the written word, the hindrances to forming a correct judgment are hardly slighter.

But he himself pointed out that "Today [1911] practically everybody writes," and the prophecy implicit in this remark—namely that a day was near when records of "the words that come forth out of their mouths" would be more complete than any hitherto imagined—has turned out to be sound. At present (and for some time past) millions of words of direct quotation from the people—

[1] As will be remembered, Mrs. Gooch invented the "beautiful sentence" much quoted in her son Sir Daniel's orations to the Swindon workmen—"Ever remember, my dear Dan, that you should look forward to being some day manager of that concern."

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observers of accidents, heavyweight contenders, magistrates, rapists and stars—are linotyped every year; transcripts of legislative proceedings and courthouse trials have been producing larger quantities of printed talk than are found in newspaper morgues; at one Eastern college a collection of published and unpublished pollster surveys—containing interviews (circa 1920-1960) by market researchers, sociologists, political scientists, economists—fills a building capable of housing over 100,000 ordinary books. The existence of this matter is certain proof that opportunities for comparative study of "the very tones" of daily utterance over the generations are already immensely superior to those available when Culture pronounced from Arnold's knee.

Opportunity is one thing, though, and action another—and the case is that little of the latter has been contemplated. Critics of society or of general culture are traditionally disposed to center their inquiries on formal literary production, sowing only an occasional wild seed in the truck garden called popculture; they have shown small enthusiasm for bulky matter, and are plainly prejudiced against the notion that a valuable vein of self-definition could be reached by probing forty years of questionnaires about Cadillac ads or a half century of cross examination of hot-rodders or wiretappers. The prejudice is understandable—even in men committed to the task of searching out and describing new tides of taste, habit and assumption; if all non-literary repositories of self-definition were unmanageable, it would be senseless to argue for their use. But if it were established that better repositories than the items named did exist: what then? The claim that investigators of social and cultural change were availing themselves of all useful resources would be shaken at least a trifle. And the consequence might well be that some vision of a new kind of endeavor for literary intelligence might show itself without shame.

Utopian is the fit word for such hopes, of course, but to use that label is not to answer the question: *are* there in fact any documents available at the moment that an amateur unequipped with IBMs and graduate students could look into—for the purpose of comparing the "ordinary voices" of recent generations? As it happens, there are many, and not the least notable of them is the homely alumni magazine of the American school and college. The back pages of these journals are filled with columns by class secre-

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taries that, in recording the doings of the graduates, offer quotations from postcards and letters in which men and women who were 21 in 1885—or 1925 or 1960—name in their own words their aspirations, activities, assumptions and tastes.[2] Primitive truths of contemporary experience peep out everywhere in these sheets. By turning the pages of a women's college bulletin the reader can easily follow the movement from femininity to feminism to universal galfridayism. With one twist of the dial he can tune to the breathlessly, managerially *chic* voice of the new woman, the voice of charm-fashion-travel copy:

> Melissa (Case) and Bob Dill spent 3 wks. last winter skiing in St. Anton, Kosters and Zermatt. Lissie was *"cowed by Alps, European ski crowds and bikini-topped stretch pants—makes Stowe look like a quaint little molehill in Ozarks. South for month in Italy, met a friend and had glorious time mixing pasta and palazzos to Paestum and back via Fiat and was thankful for O'Neils' art courses. Found some wonderful angels I'm using in my Christmas '60 line."* (Class of 1948)

And by collecting references to husbands he can confirm a sense that a shared assumption of contempt for the limp male only lately became a key element in the (bored) imagination of educated womankind. Here are two samples:

> . . . I've been leading about as average a life as any Mrs. John Doe in suburbia with 2 children: sing in the church choir . . . solicit funds for various causes, assist with Girl Scouts, chase my 3 yr. old boy when necessary and *feed my husband a late dinner when he drags in.* (Class of 1942)

> Alice (Ober) Shanahan writes that she is so exurban she has moved to Geneva, Switz., *"o.k. for people who can stand their husbands for a 2 hr. lunch every day."* (Class of 1947)

Snippets read in isolation yield inklings, of course, not Ford Foundation conclusions: to produce the latter an investigator would need to compare idioms in instances of similar "life situations." But that enterprise itself is by no means impossible to con-

[2] The quotations in this piece are drawn from the alumni magazines of two Eastern institutions, a men's college and a women's college; emphasis and fictitious names have been supplied, some dates and places have been altered, but otherwise the passages are reproduced as first printed.

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duct. An observation of a Long Island minister, secretary of the class of 1892:

> It is sixty-nine years since we stood in the gallery and sang, "Lord of all being throned afar," and heard President Boylston pray.

becomes evidence of a sort about the modern development of the religious sensibility when it is compared with the remark of a New Jersey minister of the class of 1945:

> I've been getting my feet on the ground, hope to get more chance to hob-nob with fellow alumni and sing something other than hymns.

And even when "life-situations" cannot be specified, an unrigorous eye turns up suggestive details—on subjects ranging from the changing styles of nostalgia to the evolution of the educated man's joke—in almost every issue. In the men's college class of 1899 *memory* expresses itself thus:

> . . . remember how we used to rush headlong up to Chapel? Remember also the two flights of stone steps we had to climb to get to the gallery? . . . Do you recall the staid old pictures adorning the walls? Do you also recall Old Hal's prayers—how he talked directly and earnestly to and with the Lord, using "You" entirely and not "Thou" and "Thee"? . . . Remember blind Professor Knowles "reading" long passages from the Bible and not missing a single word? [Do you remember] where good old Bobby Crowell presided, Bobby Crowell who made Latin a living language and the ancient Roman heroes everyday acquaintances? Bobby the modest scholar and the well-bred gentleman—one of the best.

In the class of 1945 memory expresses itself thus:

> I still laugh thinking of picture taking efforts at the strip tease palace in Chicago. Camera under the tablecloth—remember?

In the class of 1892 an accepted mode of teasing a classmate is the following:

> One man sent the Secretary his generous contribution to the Alumni Fund. He hopes it arrived at the College.

In the class of 1943 the modes of teasing are a shade broader:

> Our busiest classmate last year was undoubtedly Cal Church. His biggest accomplishment was getting married to Maria Sloss in Washington, D. C. on June 15, 1956. The new couple are residing in a Philadelphia suburb . . . where they are anxiously awaiting their first born, due in *April* . . . Congratulations, Cal, when you take

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> a plunge, you go in with both feet! You may be a late starter, but it appears that you'll soon close the gap!

Items even more trivial than these gain an edge of meaning as the language of one generation is related to that of another. A non-ironical clutch of metaphors from 1945 bespeaks the advent of a cheerfully cliché-ed blankness:

> . . . busy as a bee, working like a dog keeping the wolf away from the door.

A specimen of homemade rhetoric from 1889 has a tougher ring:

> Refrain from loquacity / Be crisp and concise / And regard self-pity / As a cardinal vice.

Shifts in tone concerning such subjects as the turning of years tell a comparable tale. On the latter subject a member of the class of 1891 quotes words of humor and grace:

> A remark made by [your Secretary's] father at the first Thanksgiving dinner from which all his children were absent applies equally to the '91 survivors: "At any rate, Charlotte, we may be thankful that we cannot be cut off in youth."

While on the same subject 1935 is paunchy and raucous:

> Our class baby . . . is graduating this year. Makes you feel old, eh? Well brother just look in the mirror.

Describing his residence a member of the class of 1892 lets fall that he is happily situated *"rus in urbe,"* while 1944 takes his audience inside:

> Ours is a do it yourself saltbox on a 6 acre hunk of Adirondack-type land only 21 miles from Grand Central Station. After utilities (involving 6 poles), 800 feet of road and laying a water line mostly through rock, there wasn't enough jack . . . left in the till for a garage. We do have an inside head, though, literally built around a 4 foot Italian marble sink, discarded when Rockefeller modernized the plumbing in the big house . . .

And in the matter of comparative jokes the nineteenth century classes run to rural fables about Uncle Ezra and Uncle Dudley, while more recent graduates favor items like the following:

> One suggestion for costumes for our 25th [reunion] was that Pat Harvey make up some atomic brassieres for our lovies to wear. You know—75 per cent fallout.

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If the larger configurations visible in these records contradicted the suggestions gleaned by comparing snippets, the latter would hardly be of account. But there are no contradictions. The step backward from specific entries to general contrasts not only strengthens the impression of an ever mounting tide of coarseness and vulgarity, it puts before the reader the possibility that in these times the notion of youth as complication and age as simplicity is not less than wholly false. Advancing with the classes from 1885 to the present means exchanging voices of interest, complicated natures in which wit, gentleness, pride and irony are brought together, for reports from nothingness like the following:

> Troubles galore for Bill Kevin and Ad Henry. Their Pittsburgh plant . . . has been on strike for over five months . . . with a good possibility that it will be closed indefinitely. Ad as vice-president in charge of sales hasn't had much to sell, but in spite of that competition has been reducing prices. Bill went to Florida to forget his troubles, but ruptured a disc in his back hauling in a big one.

Is the impression named simply a matter of what is called style? The typical reporter of the nineties does possess an odd turn of speech, at once careless and elegant, formal and teasing. "Burgess," he may write (approaching his ninetieth year), "Burgess seems to have no objection to running for the notable honor of the presidency . . . He rather intimates [in addition] that your Secretary is not asleep." He is fond of the third person singular, indirect discourse, Latin tags, and complicated jokes. He likes to telescope time, and the sentences in his columns, which dart without signal from generation to generation, make a pleasant demand of agility on his reader; but he sometimes ends a piece with an afterthought in which the distance between his classmates' present and past is named with a sudden affecting touch of glory—as in the sentence quoted earlier:

> It is sixty-nine years since we stood in the gallery and sang, "Lord of all being throned afar," and heard President Boylston pray.

But proclaiming that the differences in question are "mere" matters of idiom won't finally do, for, to repeat, there is more to the voice of the nineties than queer syntax. Consider the acting secretary of 1892. The fellow has about him on the one hand an attractive acidity; it appears when a classmate invites him to moralize:

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> Hall asks [says the acting secretary], Why is it that you and I who never drank a drop or smoked a smoke live on forever and so many of our more 'convivial' classmates pass on? In answer . . . note that frequently some centenarian asked the reason for his longevity [replies] that he drank a quart of whiskey every day, and, further, perhaps the acting secretary has been more convivial than Edward Hall knows.

But the same man is frequently moved by a commemorative impulse. Over the years he recounts a dozen acts of kindness with a light simplicity that does not hide quickness of feeling. He recalls in one column that:

> On May 27, 1890 [the secretary] attended the Intercollegiate Athletic Meeting when we won by a large margin over Dartmouth and six other colleges, though we were amazed in the morning at being beaten in football by Stagg's team, 18 to 4, with Stagg himself . . . grinning on the sidelines. At noon I entered a crowded restaurant. I was working off my tuition at fifteen cents an hour in the College Library, had not enough money to join a fraternity. In that restaurant Old Hal Creston [a professor], most beloved for a generation, who gave me the first overcoat I ever owned, put his arm over my shoulder and said, "Doyle, let us see if we can't get some dinner." So I dined with Old Hal.

The reporter quoted had occasion once to write a notice about the death of his own son; the item was placed well down the text of the column, and qualified as an admirably poised little piece of writing, humane and considerate in its control of the emotions of pride and loss:

> Reverend Richard Ball Doyle, D.D., according to a *New York Times* notice January 2, died in his sleep in ———, California, January 1, with notes for the sermon he planned to preach January 2 on the nightstand beside his bed. In 1940 he took the church with 1350 members and he left it with 4300 members. He leaves a wife and three children as well. He was fifty-two years old.

And an obituary on a valued friend is not less admirable at its close, where after six weighted impersonal paragraphs, the writer steps quietly forward to speak his whole conviction:

> God loved him—and so did all of us. He received his Coronation, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

From impressions of the sort offered here no conclusion should be drawn, perhaps, save that they are impressions, and that a man

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who let them stand as powerful evidence of Decline would deserve chiding on several grounds. The famous phrase does say, after all, that style is the ultimate morality of the mind, and whether or not *ultimate* is the key word, people who graduated in 1892 plainly are older than people who graduated in 1945.[3] What is more, the assumption that style is the man, or that modes of expression equal ways of feeling, or that tones of voice are in all cases synonyms for manners and behavior is not easily justified. And again: the majority of the characters who went to college in 1890 unquestionably occupied a position in society unlike that of the majority of the applicants in the age of Merit Scholarships and reverse-snob Ivy admissions offices. This barrage of qualifications and hesitations, though, does not quite make ashes of the old bidding of Culture quoted before. Ages are not the words said in them—but ages are correctly said to get the writing they deserve; literary art is about experience—but literary art is made with words: hidden in the twining complexities of these truisms lie the roots of troubles far more serious than struck factories or ruptured discs or (even) illiterate novels. Conceivably the idea of literary or social standards in the face of such troubles, the idea of reviews in a Review, can survive anything, even ignorance of these very roots. But if the survival is not a certainty, Culture's command probably should now at long last be obeyed—by idlers or researchers or any others with ears to hear "the words that come forth," the tones and the thoughts which, in an age of twenty bad new books a day, make the furniture of the general mind.

[3] There is little to suggest, however, that the idiom in which the classes of the nineties speak is a product of great age: the manner of speech recorded in the notes of these classes in 1960 is not essentially different from that recorded in the notes of the same classes thirty and forty years ago.

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LORE GROSZMANN AND W. D. SNODGRASS

Versions from Christian Morgenstern

EUROPE'S BOOKS

Korf goes to pieces when he sees
Europe's books; he looks, then flees.

He cannot understand how one
Can suffer volumes by the ton.

Thus spirit—this makes his teeth all chatter—
Is banished to a grave of matter.

Spirit is light, its habits sprightly;
It should go, therefore, clad lightly.

But Europeans find no rest
Till, in boards, they have bound it fast.

ANIMAL COSTUMES

Palmstrom is fond of animal imitations
And trains two youthful tailors
Exclusively for beast costumes.

Thus, for example, he likes to perch as a raven
Upon the topmost branches of an oak
And keep watch of the heavens.

Often, also, as a St. Bernard,
He lays his shaggy head upon brave paws,
Barks in his sleep and dreams: saved wanderers.

Or will spin a net inside his garden
Out of string and, as a spider, sit
Days there in the center of it.

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Or will swim, a goggle-eyeing carp,
Round about the fountain of his pond
And letting children feed him.

Or hang himself in costume of a stork
Under an airship's gondola
And so take off to Egypt.

DELAYED ACTION

Korf invents some jokes of a new sort
That only many hours later work.
Everybody listens to them, bored.

Yet, like some still fuse glowing in the dark,
They wake up suddenly that night in bed
Beaming like a baby newly fed.

PUTTING THE CLOCK AWAY

Exasperated by her tick, Palmstrom
Every evening puts his clock away
Under a glass with ether or opium.

He finds her all run down, though, the next day;
So, to conjure her old spirits back,
He washes her with mocha, strong and black.

THE EXPERIMENT

For an experiment, I took
A darning needle from the book

And, to this needle, brought an old
Dromedary, still quite bold.

Nearby, I had a rich man stand
With two gold bags clutched in each hand.

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The rich man, then, stepped to the fore
And knocked a knock on heaven's door.

Then spoke St. Peter: "It is writ
A camel shall more easily fit

In a needle's eye than you could squeeze in
This enormous door, you heathen."

Firmly trusting the Lord's word,
I placed a sweet roll for reward

Just behind the needle's eye
And shouted for the beast to try.

Lo! The animal passed through it,
Though squeezing himself like a newt.

The rich man, though, stared vacantly
And would say only, "Woe is me!"

TO THE NORTH

Palmstrom's grown nervous; henceforth
He will sleep always toward the North—

Sleeping to South, East or West
Provides the heart no proper rest

(*If* one's in Europe, you understand—
Not South in a warm, tropic land)

As has been written by a scholar
Who'd made a convert of Ernst Toller

And, as we ought to take for granted,
From fixed magnetism of the planet.

Curing himself, then, locally,
He wheels his bedstead northerly.

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At times, in dreams, Palmstrom can hear
The polar fox bark, sharp and clear.

WESTEASTERLY

After he hears all this explained,
Korf feels himself mildly pained—

To him, it plainly stands to reason
That, with the earth's constant rotation,

One must sleep with the center piece
Of the body strictly East.

Caustic, sarcastic, he will jest:
MY divan stays. . . . East by Eastwest!

MAIDS ON SATURDAY

They hang them over the ledge,
The carpets large and small;
In their minds they start to beat
Up masters, one and all.

Wild with satisfaction,
In rage true and berserk,
They cool their souls off for
One week full of hard work.

They beat an infernal rhythm
Until their canes split;
Ears at the front of the house
Take no account of it

But in the back are wailing,
Torn by punch and by thump,
The runners, the Persian pillows,
The eiderdown, German and plump.

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HEAVEN AND EARTH

The nightwindwhippet wails with pain;
His fur is dripping, drenched with rain;

Now he tracks the newmoonwife
Who, body bent, flees for her life.

Beneath, through fields, one distant blur:
A scurrying sub-vice-forester.

THE SANDWICH PAPER

A sandwich paper, in the glen,
besnowed upon, feels cold and then

in its fear, although it never
before, in any sense, had ever

thought about thinking, naturally,
as a thing of rags, et cetera, be

-gan, from fear, as I just men
-tioned, thinking, started and commen

-ced to think—think what that means!—in fear, it
became, as I just mentioned, spirit,

that is, you understand, not mere
-ly down from up in Heaven somewhere;

rather in consequence of a rather
precisely evolved gray brain matter

which out of wood, protein, flour, grease
(through fear) by skipping the otherwise

normal geologic ages, found
within this paper vessel and ground—

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(within and on it found, [by special
skipping of ages] ground and vessel.)

Benefitted by this benefaction,
the paper decided itself toward action,—

toward Life, toward—started anywhy,
to walking—like a butterfly. . . .

to creep, first, flying thereupon
till over the underbrush and on

up over the highway and criss
and cross and left, from that to this

the way such creatures turn toward Life
(as winds [or other things] contrive)

And yet, dear Friends! now blanche with me!—
a bird, quite fat and greedily

sees it (this is January. . . . .)
and sets himself, both hide and hairy,

and sets himself both hair and hidey
(who could end here!) (Dear God Almighty!)

(consider how much was necessary!)
and sets himself, both hide and hairy,—

In the woods, a sandwich pape
-r, won, by fear, a natural shape. . . .

Enough! The wild woodpecker gobbles
The product, irrecoverable.

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DENIS DONOGHUE

In the Scene of Being

In the chapter of *Moby Dick* called "The Symphony," far out in the fable, when we have almost despaired of Ahab's ever assenting to his membership of the human race, that first modern hero speaks to Starbuck, a man who acknowledges limits. What he says is prefigured by his sobbing, by his leaning heavily over the side of the whaler, and by Starbuck's instinctive movement toward the old man: these are good companionable signs:

> But do I look very old, so very, very old, Starbuck? I feel deadly faint, bowed, and humped, as though I were Adam, staggering beneath the piled centuries since Paradise. God! God! God!—crack my heart!—stave my brain!—mockery! mockery! bitter, biting mockery of grey hairs, have I lived enough joy to wear ye; and seem and feel thus intolerably old? Close! stand close to me, Starbuck; Let me look into a human eye; it is better than to gaze into sea or sky; better than to gaze upon God. By the green land; by the bright hearth-stone! this is the magic glass, man; I see my wife and my child in thine eye.

Yeats wrote something like that and called it "The Circus Animals' Desertion." This act is a startling transformation in Ahab, a man who thrust his will beyond any human scale of action; who invented a mask so that he could strike through it; who cried out, "Who's over me?"; who so withdrew credence from the finite order that he could say, "Oh! how immaterial are all materials! What things real are there, but imponderable thoughts?" For once, and only provisionally, Ahab sees that he has allowed his opaque Faustian will to stand between himself and the real. To a finite, limited eye he now attributes magical powers. But for once, and provisionally; for in the same chapter, now only half-outside his will, he names God or Fate as its source and therefore its sinister cause. This is the easiest way out:

> But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that

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> living, and not I. By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike.

It is only a matter of time, and of the "grand god's" victory, before our hero declares that "Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbors!"

I have called Ahab our first modern hero because he is the first and, as yet, one of the most extreme of those intransigent heroes who have enacted our own intransigence, our inability to conceive of Being except in a context of extremity and aggression. His spirit, like ours, is wilful, all the more so when it deems itself ill-used; it bears down upon the actual, crushing it; or denying it; or using the whip upon it, setting it to work. He is neither philosopher nor poet, as we remind ourselves by rehearsing St. Thomas' Commentary upon the first Book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics:* "Causa autem quare philosophus comparatur poetae est ista quia uterque circa miranda versatur."[1] The sense of wonder, the "response in love to the whole of being,"[2] the genial and dynamic relation to the actual: there is no place for such motives in Ahab's dense extremity. The world of his acts is strident, assertive, full of repudiation and destruction.

We are speaking of two opposing 'ways,' and when we place them side by side, each strives toward a definitive image of itself, at which point we call one Religion and the other Science. John Crowe Ransom has spoken of the romantic attitude to nature, or to any natural object, as the one in which we regard the endless mysterious fullness of this object, and respect the dignity of its objective existence after all—in spite of the ambition to mastery that has become more and more habitual with us. And he virtually identifies this attitude with the religious spirit; because Religion is an order of experience in which we indulge the compound attitude of fear, respect, enjoyment, and love for the external nature in the midst of which we are forced to live. "We were born of earth—why should we spurn it?" But in Science we cultivate quite a different attitude. Science is an order of experience in which we mutilate and prey upon nature; in which we seek our

[1] S. Thomae Aquinatis: *In Duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio:* edited by Raymundi M. Spiazzi (Rome, 1950) p. 18.

[2] Robert Jordan: "Poetry and Philosophy": *Sewanee Review,* LXVII, I. Winter, 1959. p. 13.

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practical objectives at any cost, and always at the cost of not appreciating the setting from which we take them. "Science is quite willing to lose the whole for the sake of the part."[3]

These are stern admonitions, and we hardly know what to do with them in the experience of reading literature. But we know that we must do something with them, and that it is too late to hide behind 'the strict function of a literary critic.' And we know this; that Poetry, which cannot be a substitute for Religion—or for anything else—, can at least remind us of the religious spirit; though this is not to say that Poetry can, after all, sustain the burden which Matthew Arnold would have placed upon it. It is to the poets and the philosophers—some of both—that we must look for gracious behaviour in the scene of Being.

II

There is Wordsworth. His rage for Being was persistent, though for the most part inarticulate. I take it to be a rage to assure himself of Being even in the absence of an apprehensible God. And we would posit in him a 'need' to find evidence of Being especially in persons—old, maimed, insane—who might be deemed to lack it or to have it barely. Such evidence is forthcoming when a person who possesses few of the normal signs of Being—strength, vitality, speed—exhibits it richly in humane gesture. Among many, there are these, notably: Simon Lee's act of gratitude, the patience of the old man in "Animal Tranquillity and Decay," strength of mind in the decrepit leech-gatherer, the continuous gesture of love in the forsaken heroine of "Her Eyes are Wild," "primal sympathy" in the protagonist of "Ode on Intimations of Immortality." Hence many of Wordsworth's poems are so 'plotted' as to reach their climax in a flowering of insight into the continuity of Being. We hardly know how to read such poems, especially those in which the heaviest strain is placed squarely upon the plot, and the 'diction' is bare shorthand notation, transparent because its only duty is to direct us forward to the 'point', the flowering. "Anecdote for Fathers" is an exemplary poem at hand: the scenic details are hardly more than nominal; the rumination is slack;

[3] John Crowe Ransom: *God without Thunder* (London: Gerald Howe Ltd., 1931) pp. 129, 139.

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the style is far more 'neutral' than that of the famous passages which Coleridge cited from Herbert and Chaucer; the 'poetry', it would seem, is in the imitation of an action, in the first instance through the plot which is the soul of the drama; and the poem is moving to the extent that we respond to full communicative acts in the scene of Being. I see no way of having its substance otherwise.

But it is unnecessary here to produce even the bones of an anthology. Two or three poets will make the point as well as thirty.

There is, obviously, Hopkins; a much more professional devotee of Being than Wordsworth, and much more professionally aware of the still point, the "selfless self of self, most strange, most still, / Fast furled and all foredrawn to No or Yes." Hopkins was engrossed with the role of Self, but he was never wilfully imperious in the face of Being. Aware that "Self / flashes off frame and face," he went on to ask a crucial question and proffer a gentle answer:

> What do then? how meet beauty? Merely meet it; own,
> Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift; then leave, let that alone.

He himself could not leave it alone, but he had too much respect for the actual wilfully to mutilate it or to abuse its substance. Besides, the actual was a vital member of that triple relationship which was the spring of his "doing-be." Kenneth Burke has described it at its best: a happy communion of self, nature, and God. If Hopkins saw in natural objects, or thought he saw in them, an essence derivable from God, the more accurate his study in the empirical sense, the more devotional he could be in his conviction that those objects were signatures of the divine presence. "Nature could serve as a kind of Christly pontification between the observer and God." "If the poet, in a Schellingesque identification of subject and object, could identify himself as agent with particulars of the natural scene, and if in his somewhat idealistic interpretation of Scotist *haecceitas* he could identify the particularity of natural objects with the divine, when all was going well he would have a happy communion of self, nature, and God."[4] "Hurrahing in Harvest" is a particularly revealing poem, especially where it veers away from Burke's summary:

[4] Kenneth Burke: *A Rheteoric of Motives* (New York: George Braziller, Inc. 1955) p. 312.

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Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks arise
Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely behaviour
Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;
And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder
Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!—
These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet.

The hills are God's shoulder: one could hardly be more thorough in identification. This is the dangerous part of the poem, the part which makes one feel, with some irritation, that the mountain would be more substantial if it were just a mountain. But let that pass. (The matter is too important to be mentioned in an aside.) Hopkins does not assert a corresponding identity between himself as *agent* and the *scene* in which he acts; the lines of demarcation are fairly clear, clearer than in, say, "Spring" or "The Sea and the Skylark," where he dissolves his own identity in that of his environment; like the speaker in Wallace Stevens' "Theory" saying "I am what is around me." For the moment, Hopkins is Hopkins and the harvest-fields are the harvest-fields, not a mere reflection of Hopkins' exaltation. (In *The Comedian as the Letter C* Crispin seeks "a liaison between himself and his environment," which if achieved will be "blissful." In "Hurrahing in Harvest" Hopkins has the liaison and the bliss; but Crispin, like Wordsworth, had to make the journey largely under his own secular steam.) Hopkins' motive, it would seem from such poems, was to render *esse*, the act-of-being, as the self's engagement with *entia*. But the 'quality' of that engagement was often a snag. There is clearly a direct relation between Hopkins' syntax and his habit of representing Being in muscular and kinetic terms. This is at once his strength and his weakness; his strength, in the remarkable inner vitality

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of the best poems; his weakness, because he was incapable of registering Being *except* in kinetic terms. When we feel that the emotion is forced, or merely asserted, without dramatic 'proof,' the explanation—not the justification—is that Hopkins had a limited range of registers; no configuration could 'enter' until it had been translated into terms of muscular response.

The opening of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is a case in point:

> Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, voluminous . . . stupendous
> Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night.

The evening of one's normative experience does not strain toward night, but Hopkins was incapable of representing such relations except in terms of almost physical constraint.[5] Hence the projection of his own feeling of strain on the qualitatively different relation of evening and night. If we take it at all, we take it on goodwill: many of Hopkins' poems trade on the reader's hospitality to an extent that seems tactless if not discourteous.

A limitation of language is a limitation of perception. Hopkins did not hold hard to the distinction between an active sense of Being—the sense which George Eliot describes in *Middlemarch*—

> If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence.

—and a habit of projecting one's own excitements upon a natural scene. He was not, in fact, a poet of lucid perception. Many of his poems, so devoted to the plenitude of Being, have the curious effect of making Being *depend upon* the insinuation of self. The self, instead of receiving and acknowledging the implicit self-affirmation of other existents, too often blurs their identity by smearing them with its own emotions. A sustained reading of Hopkins' poems makes one long for clean surfaces, for cool perceptions, for less hectic gestures in the scene of Being; perhaps for Yeats's "old nonchalance of the hand."

[5] If one translates "evening" as "possible creation"—see Alan Heuser, *The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 67)—one reads these lines as "privation of being reaching out for fullness of being." This enables the reader to ignore evening as evening, night as night, and the relation between the two.

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III

And there is Charles Tomlinson, one of the few poets in our time whose behaviour in the scene of Being is at once intelligible, reverent, and dynamic. (When we look around for other poets to praise in similar terms, we think of Ransom, Muir, Kunitz, Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop. There are others; but the list is much shorter than we would have it.) For this reason, and because Tomlinson's poems are not yet widely known, we shall give here a little more than the bare notes which tact required in our dealings with Wordsworth and Hopkins.

In the fourth part of *Antecedents,* by way of rigorous answer to "We lack nothing / But the milieu," Tomlinson says "We lack nothing / But a significant sun."[6] Lacking this, he goes down to rock bottom, to the relation between the individual mind and the Other. This is something, a way out of the prison:

> Out of the shut cell of that solitude there is
> One egress, past point of interrogation.
> Sun is, because it is not you; you are
> Since you are self, and self delimited
> Regarding sun.

We must have it formulated with cool exactitude:

> You accept
> An evening, washed of its overtones
> By strict seclusion, yet are not secluded
> Withheld at your proper bounds.

The fine relation embodies reverence, propriety, a sense of limits, identity; it is pious, poetic, not predatory or imperious. In "Cézanne at Aix" the mountain is a mountain, irreducible, not an ambiguous reflection or extension of the speaker; an existent, independent of any use we in our pride may choose to make of it:

> And the mountain: each day
> Immobile like fruit. Unlike, also
> —Because irreducible, because
> Neither a component of the delicious
> And therefore questionable,

[6] *Seeing is Believing* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, Inc., 1958) p. 54.

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Nor distracted (as the sitter)
By his own pose and, therefore,
Doubly to be questioned: it is not
Posed. It is. Untaught
Unalterable, a stone bridgehead
To that which is tangible
Because unfelt before. There
In its weathered weight
Its silence silences, a presence
Which does not present itself.

The poem enacts, in the poise of its courtesy, a relationship corresponding in grace to that of the mountain and its 'scene.' The lines swing gently between precise notations, committed only to the firm, modest duty of discrimination. The moral rhetoric, with its decorous emphases, has that unconscious fastidiousness in which, as Marianne Moore tells us, there is "a great amount of poetry." This is the tone of Tomlinson's best poems, the poems which are notes toward a supreme fiction. The fine relation, the dialogue, acknowledged and formalised and pondered with an exact sense of its contractual harmonies, issues in genial assent. (I assume it is unnecessary to remark that this, in Tomlinson, has nothing whatever to do with the limp benevolence of the Forster-Bloomsbury "Only Connect," which is nothing more than a privileged version of togetherness.) This is Tomlinson's reverence, acknowledging that we receive more than we can ever give, and that we make up the difference—if we do at all—by tact, in wonder, assent, and local recognitions:

That which we were,
Confronted by all that we are not,
Grasps in subservience its replenishment.

This poet, acknowledging his role in the scene of Being, is devoted to those relationships—seemingly chained to the metaphors of aggression and passion—which are yet open to more gracious formulations. The oxen and their master:

The man will follow, each
As the other's servant
Content to remain content.

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The moss and the rock; the sea and the railroad-tracks which seem to deny its glamour:

> The sea laps by the railroad tracks.
> To have admitted this also defines the sea.

The knife-blade and the apple; the bridge straddling vacancy as a girl's hand composes the air around it:

> At Luna
> There is a city of bridges, where
> Even the inhabitants are mindful
> Of a shared privilege: a bridge
> Does not exist for its own sake.
> It commands vacancy.

Wallace Stevens might have been thinking of such a poet as Tomlinson when he spoke of poetry as "an instrument of the will to perceive the innumerable accords, whether of the imagination or of reality, that make life a thing different from what it would be without such insights . . . a means by which to achieve balance and measure in our circumstances."[7]

We began with a relation between the individual mind and the irreducible Other. But this relation more often than not seems restless, capricious; hence the self's temptation to be Master, to set up for God. In Tomlinson's best poems the unifying motive is to translate relationships of the aggressive-passive kind—or those which necessarily seem so—into comelier terms of participation and harmony. He begins where Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* left off. Thus the master acknowledges himself as 'master,' the slave is acknowledged as 'slave,' and the next stage is the mutual assent to responsibility. This is the determining 'figure' of Tomlinson's poems; a pattern which is completed in the establishment or the disclosure of harmony, of poise. The poems press toward a moment of stillness, a condition in which the self and the Other are acknowledged for what they are, separate in a clear light, participant in harmony. The bowl on the table:

> The laric world where the bowl glistens with presence
> Gracing the table on which it unfolds itself.

[7] *Opus Posthumous* (New York: Knopf, 1957) p. 242.

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It is a 'wooing both ways.'

And as such it is a more fruitful relation than that envisaged provisionally in the early stanzas of Stevens' "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven":

> Suppose these houses are composed of ourselves,
> So that they become an impalpable town, full of
> Impalpable bells, transparencies of sound,
>
> Sounding in transparent dwellings of the self,
> Impalpable habitations that seem to move
> In the movement of the colors of the mind,
>
> The far-fire flowing and the dim-coned bells
> Coming together in a sense in which we are poised,
> Without regard to time or where we are,
>
> In the perpetual reference, object
> Of the perpetual meditation, point
> Of the enduring, visionary love,
>
> Obscure, in colors whether of the sun
> Or mind, uncertain in the clearest bells,
> The spirit's speeches, the indefinite,
>
> Confused illuminations and sonorities,
> So much ourselves, we cannot tell apart
> The idea and the bearer-being of the idea.

We are in trouble if this is true; if the only being that is important is what we ourselves 'make'. But the supposition, in the poem, is provisional: it is a hazard of the mind, rather than a place in which to rest; we are not committed to it, only to its apprehension.

A 'wooing both ways'; or it is this when everything goes well, when the materials of experience allow themselves to be placed graciously in a moral landscape. Tomlinson is not content to establish relations by *fiat,* within the poem, thus setting the poem over against our experience of the day-to-day world in which relations are often tangled or frustrate. He brings the day-to-day world as close as possible to the 'ideal' harmonies of a poem's order, by going back over the world's relations and seeing whether at least some of the tangled ones are not, after all, susceptible to more engaging interpretation. This—if we would believe Wallace

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Stevens—is the programme not of this or that poet, but of every poet, to be in agreement with the radiant and productive world in which he lives. And only when this proves impossible is he—Tomlinson, now—fierce or bitter. But often, in fact, it is impossible, or too late. When the Other is abused, there is no chance of having fine relations; we are overwhelmed by guilt, or by righteousness, watching defilements. Tomlinson thinks of such situations in terms of the wanton demolition of a house, or its defacement. In a ruined house the hearth focuses nothing:

> Within, wet from the failing roof,
> Walls greened. Each hearth refitted
> For a suburban whim, each room
> Denied what it was, diminished thus
> To a barbarous mean, had comforted (but for a time)
> Its latest tenant.

The tragedy is that of a potentially secure relation undermined; to speak of it in aesthetic terms is harmless provided we bear in mind that with this poet aesthetic terms have meaning only in a moral context.

But the fine relation can be forestalled by the abuse or the exorbitance of its other member, the *I*. The fact of Otherness is a beautiful necessity which invites recognition; if the *I* turns back upon itself, it commits a breach of tact, falls from the condition of grace. This is the Symbolist impasse; Jules Laforgue bowing to the looking-glass. Tomlinson has several poems which ponder the situation, and one which enacts its rebuke:

> Recall
>
> Gradually the supple line
> With which your hand, composing the calm
> You and your solitary companion share,
> Dipped, reiterated the brim in undulation,
> Then subsided as you removed your elbow
> To slide instantly into that present shade.
>
> She looks. And a flawed perfection
> Disburses her riches. She is watched
> And knows she is watched. The crimson reveals itself
> Recommending her posture and assured by it

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Both of her charm and her complicity: the error
And the request were mine, the conclusion is yours.

She has become a component of the delicious "and therefore questionable"; distracted—as the sitter—by her own pose and therefore "doubly to be questioned." Thus one poem glosses another in Tomlinson's single world.

To know what that world is like, we should have to ponder its praised relations and its definitive terms. The terms of distaste include these: politician, romantic, inert, mean, prodigal, suburban, diminished, whim, ugly, waste, barbarous, negligence, empty, sullen, menial, excess. And some of the terms of praise: replenishment, civil, order, ceremony, profuse, natural, consent, lucid, relation, stable, equable, comity, seasoned, human, stillness, recognition, temper, deft, haven, accomplished, presence, dependence, supple, grace. It is a Yeatsian vocabulary in the sense that Tomlinson, using such words as *ceremony, profuse, civil,* and *accomplished,* takes advantage of the tonalities which Yeats earned for them and their like in such poems as "A Prayer for my Daughter" and "The Phases of the Moon." (This is a dependence, an acknowledgment of relation, rather than a debt; like the acknowledgment of relation to Marianne Moore's "Silence" in Tomlinson's "The Castle.") The world defined by Tomlinson's key-terms is a world of pieties and ingratiations, devoted to humane purpose. It is a world of buildings, of man rooted, of gestures, pictures, cities of the mind, acts vibrant with meaning and direction, gracious contracts and promises:

Released
From knowing to acknowledgment, from prison
To powers, you are new-found
Neighbored, having earned relation
With all that is other. Still you must wait,
For evening's ashen, like the slow fire
Withdrawn through the whitened log
Glinting through grain marks where the wood splits:
Let be its being: the scene extends
Not hope, but the urgency that hopes for means.

We have spoken of situations seemingly encased in the aggressive-passive predicament, positing the aggressive motive as the

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pervading one in modern literature. If Tomlinson's poems reveal a danger-sign, it is in their occasional tendency to retreat to the merely passive position in the scene of Being. If not inevitable, such a retreat is understandable as part of the poet's distaste for aggression, for wilfulness, for mastery. But it is a retreat, nonetheless. With some disquiet I note that Tomlinson has recently endorsed Martin Buber's early redaction of certain Chinese emphases in philosophy as a timely critique of our own; in particular, the "containment of the will" and "the potentialities of quietude" sponsored by the author of the *Tao*.[8] To say that the West has much to learn from the East in this regard is a magisterial understatement, but the Taoist position itself is questionable insofar as it tends toward mere quietism. This is less China than *chinoiserie:* there must be a more Confucian way out. One should aspire to evade the aggressive-passive metaphor altogether, as so many of Tomlinson's own poems have done; substituting the act of *participation,* which is dynamic as quietism cannot be. Tomlinson's fine notation for this is men rebuilding a churchyard wall.

Perhaps at this point we should resort to the philosophers—one or two of them, and these in the barest of recitals—to rehearse the motive of participation in discursive terms. Clearly, participation depends upon our assent to Being, and this as the prime commitment in an intelligible life. Before Wallace Stevens could establish a dynamic relation between his jar and Tennessee, he had to assent —at least provisionally—to the separate and irreducible being of each, the ABC of Being. As in his "Study of Two Pears," "The pears are not seen / As the observer wills." (This is provisional in Stevens, though he commits himself to it, happily, in one of his last essays, "On Poetic Truth.") M. Gilson has pointed out that St. Thomas had a very lively awareness of the plenitude and continuity of the concrete, but he remarks also that it is very difficult to express this awareness by the concept of Being. A philosopher who would begin with the concept of Being alone undertakes to deduce the concrete from the abstract. To circumvent this difficulty, the philosopher sometimes tries to enrich the ontological void of the concept of Being by giving it the fullness of an intuition of existentiality. This is to come closer to the truth, but it is not yet to attain it:

[8] *Poetry,* Vol. 93, No. 6. March, 1959. p. 411.

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> Conceived as an intellectual intuition of 'being as being,' the proper object of metaphysics, this knowledge would permit us to attain by simple sight the inexhaustible and incomprehensible reality of 'real being in all the purity and amplitude of its own intelligibility or its own mystery.'

There is a 'qualitative' requirement, too:

> An essence is dead when it is deposited in the understanding as a quiddity, without preserving its contact with the act-of-being.[9]

(This would be like having words but no syntax.)

I take it that it is this sense of the act-of-being which, in varying degrees, explains the 'plottiness' of many of Wordsworth's poems, the muscular exertions of Hopkins', and the urge in some of Stevens and most of Tomlinson to render essences by setting existents in lithe relationships. It is the relationship, the composed movement of energy between the objects, which guarantees their contact with the act-of-being. We are reminded by Gabriel Marcel —indeed it is the ground of his entire thought—that the dynamic acknowledgment of Being is the duty of the individual man by virtue of his very existence.

Ishmael is our understanding of this. Toward the end of Melville's fable he speaks of the whale-smoke and the flames leaping from the try-works, and the harpooneers pitching blubber into the pots. As the men look into the fire, their eyes are scorched, their laughter leaps up like the flames, and the Pequod plunges into that blackness of darkness which seems to Ishmael "the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul." It is a grim occasion, a hazard of the psyche which this time will be fatal; the men become "fiend shapes," capering half in smoke and half in fire. Ishmael fears the artificial fire which "makes all things look ghastly," and he thinks warmly of morning and the sun and the clean outline of things:

> To-morrow, in the natural sun, the skies will be bright; those who glared like devils in the forking flames, the morn will show in far other, at least gentler, relief; the glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp—all others but liars!

But this comfort itself is provisional:

> The sun hides not the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this earth. So, therefore, that mortal man

[9] Etienne Gilson: *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas:* trans. L. K. Shook (New York: Random House, 1956) pp. 43, 370.

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> who hath more of joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true—not true, or undeveloped.

Solomon warns us that "the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead," and this, Ishmael says, even while he lives:

> Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me. There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness.

Fire is Ahab's element, the wilful element in which man is reduced to a "shape," full of crazy conceits of the will. The fire is at once deceptive and destructive; it stands in the scene of Being, opaque, sullen, and thus like the human will setting up for God. When we gaze into it, our laughter leaps up like the flames. But the proper sense of Being needs a different image, at once gracious and dynamic. For Ishmael it is the Catskill eagle, which can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces. "And even if he for ever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar."

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PETER H. LEE

The Angler's Calendar

from the Korean of Yun Sôn-do, 1587-1671

Spring

The fog lifts in the front stream,
And the sun lances the back hills.
The night tide neaps, and now,
The high water rushes upon the shore.
Heave away, ho, scull the boat,
Distant hills and waters swell my heart.

Welcoming day is fresh and fervent,
Fishes leisurely float in the blue.
Weigh anchor, friends, heave it up,
Gulls too come, wing upon wing.
Heave away, ho, I have a rod;
Have you loaded a flagon of wine?

A puff of east wind ruffles
The surface of the stream into ripples.
Hoist sail, friends, spread the sail,
Let's go to West Lake by the East.
Heave away, ho, scull the boat,
Front hills pass by, back hills greet us.

Is it a cuckoo that cries?
Is it the willow that is blue?
Several roofs in a far fishing village
Swim in the dusk, magnificent.
Boy, fetch an old net!
Fishes are climbing against the stream.

Sun shines with the lance of light,
Water too is calm, calm as oil.
Should we cast a net at all, friends,
Should we drop a line on such a day?

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The poem of Ch'ü Yüan stirs my fancy;
I have forgotten all about fishing.[1]

Let's return to our grass sill,
Twilight trails in the pious west.
Lower sail and scan the river bank,
Willows and flowers are supple and sweet.
Who would envy three dukes?
Who would now think of caps and gowns?

Let's go to Orchid Island,
View the place and fragrant flowers.
Stopping the boat small as a leaf,
I ask what I have taken aboard.
Nothing except myself when I sailed off,
When I row back, the moon is my tenant.

Drunk I will lie asleep and
Leave the boat only before the shoal.
Moor the boat, friends, Hangchow is near,
Crimson petals leap on the stream.
O sweet joy of the angler's life—
Can the dusty world last long?

Let's stop angling and salute
The moon over the raspberry window.
Drop anchor, friends, night settles,
The cuckoo too sings a sweet song.
The heart shouts its peak of joy,
I have lost my way in the dark.

Tomorrow, tomorrow, we have tomorrow,
A spring night will soon see the day.
Boat ashore, and with rod as cane,
Let's find our brushwood door.
Spring stirs the joy in my veins,
O how many sweet days, sheer contentment!

[1] Here the poet is reminded of the poem, *Yü fu* ("The Fisherman"), written about the middle of the 3rd century B.C. and traditionally attributed to Ch'ü Yüan. The poem contains a famous admonition uttered by the fisherman, who suggests that one should seek office in good times and retire when the times are troubled.

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Summer

A tedious rain is over at last,
The stream is now limpid and glassy.
Shouldering a rod on the boat
I cannot still my loud heart.
Who has painted the magic scenes,
Smoky rivers and suspended cliffs?

Wrap the steamed rice with lotus leaves,
You need no viands, no other dainties.
I have already my blue arum hat,
Bring me, boy, a green-coir raincoat.
Mindless gulls too come and go,
Do they follow me, or I them?

A wind rises among the duckweed fronds,
Cool, cool is the raspberry window.
Let the boat float on moving water,
Untrustworthy is the summer breeze.
Northern islet and sweet southern river,
A scroll of elysium in my dream!

When the river is muddy and miry,
No matter to wash your feet there.
I wish to go to the Wu River, sad are
The angry waves of a thousand years.
Paddle the boat, then, to the Ch'u River; but
Catch not the fish of a loyal soul.[2]

How rare is a mossed strand where
The willow groves are young and green.
Paddle the boat, friends, and think—
Anglers fight not for the fishes' haunt.

[2] The 3rd and 4th lines refer to Wu Yüan, a native of Ch'u. Denounced by his lord, Fu Ch'ai of the state of Wu, he committed suicide. Fu was angry, caused his body to be put into a leather sack and thrown into the Wu River, by the bank of which the people raised a shrine to his memory. The 5th and 6th lines refer to Ch'ü Yüan (*d. c.* 288 B.C.), a minister in the state of Ch'u. He objected to the use of force and was banished from the court. Distressed, he drowned himself in the Milo (or Ch'u) River.

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When you meet a hoary hermit,
Yield him the choicest stream.[3]

Moved by the precious pleasures,
I knew not the long day had closed.
Lower sail on the roving waves,
Let's beat a stroke with a song.
Who would know this immortal delight,
The joy of a rower in sweet songs?

A western sky burns with splendor,
Twilight will soon assault us, lo!
Put the boat ashore and look—
Under the pine a path winds on the rock.
Do you hear the cuckoo's sweet calling
Here and there in the green verdure?

Broad is the water over the sandy bank,
Let's lie under the grass roof—
Moor the boat, friends, and rest—
Fan off mosquitoes, no, flies are worse.
Only one worry, you would say,
Traitors might overhear our talk.

Difficult to foresee the sky's mood,
Night may conspire wind and storm.
Drop anchor, friends, and answer,
Can one cross fields with a boat?
Fine and fresh are the magic herbs,
That grow thick along the furious flumes.

Lo the snail-shell of my hut
Beset from four corners by the clouds.
Put the boat ashore and climb
The stone path with bulrush fan in hand.
O the idle life of an old angler,
This is my work, this is my song.

[3] Refers to a tradition that when the legendary emperor, Shun, went to Mt. Li, he was given the field, and when he went to Lei Stream, he was given a good place for fishing. The lines therefore imply that one should lead an old fisherman to an ideal place for fishing, following the good example of the people in the time of Shun.

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Autumn

What is more transcendental
Than the life of a complete angler?
Mock not a hoary fisherman, friends,
He is painted by every great hand.
You say joy of the seasons is the same;
No, the best is the delight of autumn.

Autumn comes to a sea village,
The fishes too are sleek, sleek.
Heave away, ho, friends, be merry,
Merry and gay on the swelling waves.
Turning round I see the dusty world,
Joy doubles as further I sail away.

Where the white clouds take their wings,
Solemnly the branches sing in unison.
Let's go to West Lake at high tide,
And to the East Lake at low water.
White duckweeds and crimson smartweeds
Sway softly on the supple shore.

Beyond where the wild geese fly,
The unknown peaks blossom without fruit.
I will angle there, of course, but
Merry it is too to be in wine.
Western skies devour the setting sun,
A thousand hills stitch a magic scroll.

Silver scales and jade scales,
Did I have a good catch today?
Let's build a fire of reed bushes,
Charcoal the fat fishes one by one.
Pour wine from an earthenware jar,
Fill the gourd cup, fill to the brim.

Gently, o gently blows a side-wind,
The boat is under easy sail.

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Darkness slays the light of day,
But a clear delight is there still.
Who gets tired of the glory of autumn,
The burning trees and pearly waters?

Silver dews, scattered, roll on the grass;
Moon rises beneath the mist of trees.
Far and foggy is the Phoenix Pavilion,[4]
To whom should I give this bright light?
The white hare pounds the magic pills:
But I cannot feed them to our heroes.

Where is it, friends, where am I?
Do they exist separate, heaven and earth?
Since the west winds cannot gall us,
No use to fan off the empty air, no.
Further, since I have heard no words,
What need is there to cleanse my ears?[5]

Frost falls on my cotton clothes:
I am not cold.
Complain not that the boat is too narrow;
Compare it instead to the muddy world.
Paddle the boat, friends, we shall live,
We shall live this way today and ever.

I want to admire the bright moon
In the stone cave in the bamboo grove.
But the paths in the empty hills
Are hidden by the stranded season.
Since the white clouds too follow me,
O heavy is the sedge-hat on my head!

[4] The Phoenix Pavilion is the royal palace. Tradition says that the white hare pounds rice in the moon.

[5] Refers to the story told of the two legendary recluses, Hsü Yu and Ch'ao-fu. Hsü Yu was known for his high purpose and virtue, and the Emperor Yao wished to offer him the throne. The suggestion horrified him, and he replied that he had to cleanse his ears because the Emperor told a pure man such a story. When Ch'ao-fu saw Hsü Yu cleansing his ears by the Ying River, he pulled his cow away from the water, because he would not let his animal drink the water where Hsü Yu washed his ears.

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Winter

The clouds have rolled away,
The timid sun mounts the winter sky.
Heaven and earth have lost vitality;
But water alone is constant and cold.
Set the boat, friends, and behold,
The boundless water is a silk brocade.

Mend your fishing-line with rod,
Repair too the boat with bamboo sheets.
They say even the Hsiao and Hsiang,
And the Tungt'ing Lake freeze at night.[6]
Heave up the anchor and be happy;
No, no place is better than our waters.

The lake waters shudder, unfinned,
Fishes are gone to the distant swamps.
Sun shines, but shines for a moment;
So spread the sail, friends, go out to sea—
Bait the hook now, but bait quickly,
The fat fishes will bite then, they say.

A snow settles over the night,
A wintry scene blinds our timid eyes.
In front lies the water, broad and bright,
Behind are myriad hills, the jade screens.
Is it a fairy land, or Buddha's realm?
Certainly it happens not in the human world.

I have forgotten the net and rod,
Beat uselessly the edge of the boat.
How many times have I wished,
Wished to cross the stream ahead?
Blow, gale of wind, blow at random,
Perhaps set my leaf-boat in motion.

The crows that hasten to their nest
Fly overhead with preened coat.

[6] Hsiao and Hsiang are two famous tributaries of the Yangtze. Tungt'ing Lake is in Hunan, China.

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Darkness envelops our homeward path,
The evening snow too lies thick.
Who will attack the Oya Lake and
Avenge the shame of soldier-trees?[7]

See red cliffs and green walls—
How they wield their magic brush.
Stop the boat, what difference is it
Whether one catches the silver scales?
In an empty boat with a coir-hat,
Alone I sit with a mighty heart.

A solitary pine by the silver strand
Defies the sun and the sinewy sky.
Scorn not the distant clouds, friends,
They screen the jaundiced world.
Nor scold the storm and waves, no—
They arrest the bustle of the world.

People used to praise my way of life
In the pious land of the fairies.
Drop anchor and tell me who wore
The sheep-skin cloth at Chili Shore.
And during three thousand six hundred days
Let's count our trade blessed.[8]

Day closes, time to feast and rest.
Put the boat ashore and come, elated;
Let's tread on the path where
The blissful snow strews crimson petals;
Lean against the pine window and gaze
As the snow moon crosses the western sky.

[7] Refers to the tactics used by Li Su in the rebellion of Huai-si during the T'ang dynasty. Li captured the rebel's fortress by setting the geese and ducks free on a snowy night, thus camouflaging the marching of his troops. Here the poet reveals his hidden sorrow and asks himself when he will have a chance to avenge himself upon his political enemies. The reader should remember that the poet spent most of his life in exile due to party-strife at court.

[8] "Land of the fairies": in the original the place mentioned is the traditional Chinese elysium where only recluses and fairies reside. The 3rd and 4th lines refer to Yen Kuang, a contemporary of the Han Emperor Kuang-wu. He retired to Mt. Pu-ch'un and spent his life fishing. The 5th and 6th lines refer to T'ai-kung, who went into voluntary exile to escape the tyranny of the Shang king, Chou, 1075 B.C., and spent ten years fishing. King Wên found him upon the banks of Wei and carried him away to be his chief counselor.

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Four Korean Poems

In the valley of jujubes red and ripe,
Chestnuts burst open and fall fast.
Crabs move and mutter in the mud,
They crawl in the rice puddle.
Let's buy a sieve and strain new wine,
Drink and test the season's joys.

—Hwang Hûi, 1363-1412

The wind is naturally clear,
The moon too is naturally bright.
In the bamboo garden and pine fence,
Not a speck invades, nor grains of dust.
How fresh and fervent is my life
With a long lute and piled scrolls!

—Kwôn Ho-mun, 1531-1587

Bundle the piles of verbose missives,
Burn the scrolls of empty scribbles—
At last I ride home on a swift horse,
Whipping the bitter autumn winds.
A bird newly freed cannot be happier;
I savour freedom, sup the rustic air.

—Kim Kwang-uk, 1579-1656

Speak, chrysanthemum, why do you shun
The orient breeze of the third moon?
"I had rather freeze in a cruel rain
Beside the hedge of dried sticks,
Than humble myself to join the parade:
Those flowers of a fickle spring."

—An Min-yông, c. 1870

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JOHN SIMON

Theatre Chronicle

ONE PLAY I ALWAYS AVOIDED READING was Denis Johnston's *The Moon in the Yellow River*. I had discovered at a tender age that there are only two Irish plays. There is the modern one about the I.R.A. and the Black and Tans and the poetic hero who dies spouting poetry, and his girl-friend who is too good a Catholic to go to bed with him, but not so good a one to escape being impregnated by the villain. There is also a brave mother who, almost without stopping to stir the stew, loses countless sons, and a braggart father who guzzles and gabs with his cronies, and the younger son who betrays the movement and is shot, and the good priest who knows everything and everyone (and especially his housekeeper), and the bad priest who understands and tolerates nothing (least of all the heroine's pregnancy or the need for planting a harvest of bombs). This more or less takes care of the plot, but for the sake of the local color there are assorted drunks, brawlers, liars, keening crones, provocative widows, and a tremendous number of participial constructions introduced by the word "and," and "herself" and "himself" proliferating. The other play is the historical one about a beautiful queen and her hero lover and the aging, jealous king who sets obvious traps for them into which they fall with heroic stupidity. Sometimes, to be sure, it is the queen herself who is jealous, and sometimes there is a chorus of beggars or strolling players—especially if the play is in verse, which it usually is, meaning that it has a few participles less and a few more references to Maeve, Cuchulain, Conchubor and other figures famous for not being pronounced anywhere near the way they are spelled.

Well now, I had the highest, and most desperate, hopes that *The Moon in the Yellow River* was the *tertium quid:* the one Irish play that was not one of the other two. If there is incontinence in it, I prayed to myself, it surely concerns consumption of opium; the poetic hero surely spouts haikus or, at worst, pantoums; the lovely heroine is surely seduced by an unfrocked Buddhist monk; and if anything gets blown up, it is a sampan with home-made fireworks. Imagine if you can my horror when, after years of religiously saving up this play, I was finally confronted with it at the East End Theatre. There was the same poetic hero shot in the process of I.R.A. activities, the same comic tipplers and termagant housekeeper, and the same electric works being blown to kingdom come. No, you cannot imagine my consternation. Not even the unwonted presence among the dramatis personae of a comic Austrian and a misanthropic scientist could make up for this

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orgy of *déjà vu*. There was not a single sampan in sight—just the usual junk.

Nevertheless, the play has a modest charm which was well served by the decent direction of David Fulford and scenery by Mary Ann Reed that successfully defied the tightness of both space and budget. Most of the acting was commendable, except for the scientist of Roy Poole, a hulking clod of an actor for whom it is about as easy to enter into the subtleties of a character as it is for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, and the poetic rebel of Jonathan Frid, whose mouthings and posturings were deplorable. (His notion of diction is to make the final consonant equal in length all the foregoing vowels rolled together.) But casting the roles of intellectuals will always be a problem while our actors nurture their ignorance like a delicate, exotic fruit.

By way of contrast: Gustaf Gründgens brought his Hamburg troupe to the City Center, and they gave us a *Faust* (unfortunately only Part One) of such overwhelming intelligence and elegant spareness that one almost missed a little old-fashioned schmalz here and there. The sets by Theo Otto were impressive by their very omission of detail, and Mark Lothar's music was equally effective whether derived from German folk song or New Orleans jazz. Its association of the *Walpurgisnacht* with the American dance hall was as thought-provoking as the image of Faust's study with retorts and alembics ominously built up into a sort of atomic reactor. Tasteful economy presided over the cutting of the text, too, enabling the Deutsches Schauspielhaus to reduce the running time to three hours. But it was the direction that was particularly lean and sinewy: the movement, though often intricate, was always purposeful and swift: handsomely stylized for Faust and Mephistopheles, pleasantly raffish for the simpler folk, and conspicuously absent from the inhabitants of the empyrean. Lines were delivered with the ease and precision of German gymnasts at the Olympics: neat, efficient, speedy syllables intricately performing on the high bar of poetry. But a little cool, a little lacking in heart; thus the most celebrated bravura passages were delivered particularly casually and trippingly: Gründgens, a somewhat hoary Mephistopheles, throwing away debonairly such lines as "Staub soll er fressen, und mit Lust" or "Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint!" and Will Quadflieg, an extremely intelligent Faust, vying with him in underplaying lines like "Verweile doch! du bist so schön." But, mind you, all this was done with utmost finesse and deliberateness, as if the actors wanted to illustrate the Goethean apothegm that the master reveals himself only within self-imposed restrictions. I was fortunate, however, in seeing both Gründgens and, on another day, the American-born Ullrich Haupt play Mephistopheles; for Haupt's slightly broader interpretation, though it had not Gründgens's grace of movement and general *raffinement*, added some welcome earthiness to the part, and made a scene like that with the doltish student considerably more comical. I must admit that I rather

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missed the poodle and Gretchen's spinning wheel; the former may have been a victim of quarantine regulations, but the latter's absence was surely emblematic of rabid streamlining.

The handful of plays from the repertory of the Comédie Française, which followed the Germans into the City Center, was an *hors d'oeuvre* of a different color. Though it was pleasant to see and hear this venerable aggregation once again, how sadly it falls short of what it was no more than, say, a dozen years ago (I am not even talking of periods when an entirely fresh outside influence, such as Barrault's or Jean Marais', took over). Nowhere to be seen now a *jeune premier* like Jean Chevrier, a young leading lady like Renée Faure, a mature leading man like Jean Davy, a wily, subtle character actor like the late Aimé Clariond. True, Jacques Charon and Robert Hirsch have tried to infuse some new spirit into the proceedings, but Charon gives us burlesque, which, at best, has limited application, and Hirsch introduces a Marlon Brando-Tennessee Williams note, which has its curiosity value, but strikes me rather like going to the Tour d'Argent and ordering hamburger and California wine.

To get down to particulars, *L'Impromptu de Versailles* was done in a routine, faded fashion, rather like the set and costumes that badly need redesigning. And as Georges Descrières played Molière without imaginativeness or delicacy, this charming little play flapped haplessly around a wobbling pivot. No one was credited with the direction, perhaps because no one in the present company could remember that far back. *Les Fourberies de Scapin* suffered greatly by comparison with Barrault's famous production. Where Robert Hirsch's Scapin was different—Actors' Studio with French dressing—Barrault's was prototypical and moving; where Hirsch's décor and costumes were agreeable, Christian Bérard's were works of art; where Jacques Charon's staging was hearty and rambunctious, Barrault's was also poetic and wisely humane. A typical difference: Géronte, the ornery curmudgeon, was played by Michel Aumont, a by no means untalented but very young and physically slight actor, made to look like a dyspeptic Santa Claus. When he gets into the bag and mercilessly beaten, one almost feels sorry for this frail and rather introverted miser. In Barrault's production, Charles Mahieu, a wheezing, blubbery whale of a man, was Géronte, and to see such a mountain of meanness get its just deserts releases those atavistic satisfactions in an audience that good commedia dell'arte, or Punch and Judy shows, are meant to sublimate. The current production was further hampered by Micheline Boudet's factitious and unprepossessing Zerbinette—her big laughing scene was downright amateurish. (Mlle Boudet went on to confirm this poor first impression in her subsequent appearances. The Français has fallen on bad times indeed if this is the best leading lady they can muster.)

Tartuffe, as directed and played by Louis Seigner, was another stock, stale affair (in this case no one was credited with scenery and costumes,

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and for good reason), which, in turn, suffered horribly from comparison with Jouvet's last production of it. Seigner, who in the right part can be unbeatable (for example, as the turnkey in the movie Christian Jacque made of *The Charterhouse of Parma),* is neither physically nor psychologically suited to the role of Tartuffe. Whereas Jouvet could make both the holiness and the unholiness of the man larger than life-size, so that we stared into his hollow aspect as into a cave inhabited by an oracle or monster, Seigner's petty, fatty, bourgeois nastiness hardly conveys the sinisterness of hypocrisy's eponymous hero. The difference is like turning on your television set expecting Bishop Sheen, and getting Cardinal Spellman instead. There were, however, two entirely satisfying performances by the charming and sensitive Annie Ducaux as Elmire, and the thoroughly dependable Lise Delamare as Dorine.

The high point of the engagement was *Britannicus.* Here there was extremely suitable staging by Michel Vitold (whom one remembers as a distinguished actor, and one not trained at the Comédie), noble scenery and costumes by Francine Gaillard-Rissler, and some good performing. In the part of Nero, Hirsch's "method"-acting came into its own, and contrasted meaningfully with Annie Ducaux's grand, but not too grand, style as Agrippina. Danièle Ajoret's Junie, though vocally a little limited, was exquisite visually and histrionically; François Chaumette, rather undistinguished in other parts, had an interestingly skeptical, flaccid interpretation of Narcisse. It would have been a notable evening but for Michel Bernardy's effeminate, awkward, often ranting Britannicus, hell-bent on proving himself the second-noblest Roman after Winnie Ille Pu. What struck me especially was how much sturdier Racine's genius is than Molière's: how much more readily than Molière's often dated buffoonery Racine's poetry triumphs over an offensive performance such as Bernardy's. What struck me also was the ignorance and rude noisiness of the audience. Little did they appreciate that they were in the presence of that ultimate beauty "whose novelty survives," as Cowper put it, "Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years."

The last bill was Feydeau's *Le Dindon,* which translates into English as a turkey. Those who enjoy bedroom farce, i.e., all Frenchmen and, apparently, most Americans, found these more than three hours of straining toward various beds into which hardly anyone finally falls, uproarious. I laughed intermittently, but thought the notion that bedroom farce can be paced and stressed in much the same way as Corneille questionable. Two things stood out: the unmannered and thoroughly believable performance of Catherine Samie as a tart, and the flitting, mincing, and strutting of the entire male contingent except for Louis Seigner. It was as though they had needed shots of adrenalin for this change of tempo, but received, by mistake, estrogen. One wonders whether *Le Dindon* really lends itself to production by an all-

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female cast. But if for nothing else, we must thank the Comédie for corroborating the dictum of the boy Rimbaud: "Racine est le pur, le fort, le grand."

Let us turn now to a rather different France for a look at Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. There are several objections one can make to the play: that it far outstays the welcome of its imaginatively satirical point; that the switch from fantasy to realism in the last act is clumsy; that, being an attempt of Ionesco's to befriend the bourgeois whom he used to flabbergast, it ends up, like most compromises, unsatisfactory to both parties, Parnassus and the pit, alike. The fact remains that it is wittier, richer in ideas (even if some of them merely rehash former Ionesco *trouvailles*—the Logician, for example, is only a paler version of the Professor in *The Lesson*), and more genuinely theatrical than almost anything written these days. The production, likewise, is not quite up to what we have come to expect from that matchless director, Joseph Anthony. Whereas Ionesco tried to bring the play down only to the level of the French public, Anthony has attempted to reduce it further to the catchment basin of Broadway. Though the staging has his usual nervous inventiveness and bristles with ferocious fun, the play's deeper, oracular voice is gagged by the gags. The performances are creditable, some outstanding, though the acting styles, unfortunately, do not blend as well as they might. All in all, *Rhinoceros* is not magnificent, but it *is* art.

How sad, by comparison, is a play like *Advise and Consent,* which also concerns political and personal morality. To see a good deal of directorial skill, some very able acting, astonishing sets (Rouben Ter-Arutunian has designed bold semi-abstractions, mostly rectangles, that slide from one position into another and transport you with them from Senate chamber to bedroom) wasted on a piece of sensationalistic and tendentious writing that bears only the faintest, most gimmicked-up resemblance to political or psychological truth, is, to put it mildly, saddening. It seems to me that in the America of the future (where Loring Mandel's play and Allen Drury's best-selling novel on which it is based take place) the attitude toward a single, youthful homosexual experience would not be medieval. Yet the "guilty" senator's devoted wife is scared nearly out of her wits by it, and he himself dare not confess it to the fellow-senator nearest and dearest to him and who could be of considerable help in the smear campaign that is about to begin. That the protagonist's only recourse, rather than striking back at his vile enemies, should be prompt suicide, makes him into an intellectual, if not moral, coward. But it is clear that the author (I shall not try to distinguish between Mr. Drury and Mr. Mandel, who seem to me nothing if not interchangeable) is disingenuously playing both for sympathy for his hero and for the endorsement of the broader public, which, presumably, demands that any deviation from the straight and narrow be fully expiated. Again, it seems unlikely that a president of

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this country and some of the highest office-holders would be "fellow-travelers," as the play would have it; what seems more likely is that a good many of them will, as always, be ignorant and stupid. But the author, with typical middlebrow sanctimoniousness, can conceive of corruption in high places, but not of imbecility. And the corrupt ones, of course, lose out in the end. It is, again, a total misrepresentation to show the American people as reacting to Russian successes on the moon with terror and desperate craving for appeasement; at least until the bloodletting begins, the people will always be on the side of the warlike swagger. I find the author's motives highly suspect, but since I am not concerned with his politics but with his writing, suffice it to say that this is on the level of "We have a marriage, haven't we?" and "Stranger things have happened—like the Grand Canyon." But he tries to make up with redundancy for what he lacks in other areas: people are asked to speak "succinctly, with brevity," and minds are described as "tough, strong," and so forth.

All this would not have bothered me so much as the audience reaction. The absurd seriousness with which this play was discussed during intermissions and explained to one's neighbor during performance ("He is a homosexual, you see . . ." "Let me think, in the book it was the other one who . . ." "*That* is meant to be Stevenson, don't you know?") was enough to fill one with a far greater contempt than one could muster for the novelist and his adapter. Though that, too, was not inconsiderable.

If I marveled at the audiences of *Advise and Consent,* it is the reviewers of *A Far Country,* who, with their raves, took my breath away. This play about Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis is to drama roughly what the Great Moments in Medicine posters displayed in the windows of drugstores are to art. Or, for that matter, to science. The notion that great scientific discoveries make superb theatre is based on the confusion of the momentous with the dramatic, and all of Henry Denker's embellishing his subject helps about as much as if, had he been writing a play about Newton's discovery of gravity, he had upped the number of apples to a thousand. It may be, of course, that Mr. Denker was merely trying to complete the triptych the Warner Brothers had begun with *Pasteur* and *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet,* but there is a likelier reason: at Easter, Mr. Denker gave us a television play about Barabbas. Obviously, if one writes about such ecumenical father figures as Christ and Freud, one is comfortably wafted into realms beyond the reach of mere criticism. It is relevant to point out here that Mr. Denker could have learned something from those ineffably boring passages in Milton's epics when Divinity is brought on stage. But it was ever so nice to see that Freud was greatly helped in his discovery of the labyrinthine nature of the mind by toying with a ball of wool his wife left in his office, and that the good lady was equally ready with helpful cups of black coffee as with insights into her husband's

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psyche which could only be called Freudian. But, don't worry, the path of genius is never smooth: there is plenty of opposition from foes, and incomprehension from friends, family, and patients to provide as generous a quota of platitudes as you'll find kicking around any of the city's stages. Freud himself once explained the success of one of Sardou's historical plays with "The French love such oversimplifications." It seems they are not the only ones.

Norman Twain, the producer of *Roots,* was ill-advised in picking out the middle part of the very fine Wesker Trilogy. He was probably misled by its being the most successful of the three plays in England, but then there it had Joan Plowright—here there was only the hard-working but less than convincing Mary Doyle. Either the first or the third play would have gone over better in this country, because both the accents and the personalities of London's lower-class Jewry are within the grasp of American actors and audiences. Norfolk, on the other hand, might just as well be Sirius. The Babel of tongues, or, at any rate, accents that went into this local attempt at reproducing Norfolk peasant life is indescribable: there was everything from purest Hollywoodese to Third-Avenue Irish, as well as several brogues that came and went like spectators at a seven-day bicycle race. Perhaps the best performance was that of a superannuated, carious farm radio, which delivered sickly-sounding music along with extremely robust static. It was through just such static in the acting and ponderous staging that Arnold Wesker's message had to reach us. But this touching tale of a human being trying to teach her fellows a fulness of living and thinking she herself has not yet learned, and finding that, while she loses all her potential students and even her teacher, the man she loves, she at least succeeds in teaching herself, is sincerely and intelligently enough told to survive both its slight inherent sluggishness and the adventitious heaviness of this production. Yet I wonder how much this play can mean to audiences unfamiliar with the other two: the aims of the three plays are carefully interwoven and need one another's proximity to achieve their full impact.

One truly delectable and absolutely adult entertainment was briefly to be seen off-Broadway: a pair of short musicals by Jay Thompson which appeared under the collective title *Double Entry.* His book, in both cases, was pleasantly inconsequential; his tunes, completely endearing and, in some cases, even gifted with a wholly individual idiom; his lyrics could be tender or, what is harder, at once devilishly clever and innocently funny. To judge from this his first independent work, Jay Thompson is a man of such overwhelming talents that, if he is not struck down by the combined envy of everyone else in the field, he should soon become its uncontested champion. Why with excellent direction by Bill Penn, lovely performances—except for Jane Connell's hamming—such as one almost never encounters off-Broadway, and a

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good press *Double Entry* should still have failed, will remain one of those curious, heartbreaking theatrical mysteries.

Not mysterious at all is the success of *Mary, Mary* by Jean Kerr, whom I can best describe as the Madonna of Larchmont Notions. Mrs. Kerr is just so much more intelligent and literate than the average suburban matron to be able to paste together with some handy household glue five or six hundred wisecracks caught on the wing somewhere between the cocktail table and the kitchen sink. The three specialties of the house are the pseudo- (and, of course, anti-) intellectual joke like "He was writing long intellectual articles proving that Shakespeare was a homosexual—sort of the intellectuals' answer to *Photoplay*"; the joke that tickles the alert housewife's sensibilities: "I thought of you as the Golden Couple smiling over bowls of steaming Campbell's chicken soup"; and, most meretricious of all, the clean dirty joke: "I edit the letters to *The Ladies' Home Journal*.—They need to be edited?—It does seem rather like incest, doesn't it?" All of these, along with the embryonic characterizations and stock situations around which they are wrapped, seem to have been written in spilled Bloody Marys on white formica counter tops. But Mrs. Kerr has ascended, if not to heaven, to the cover of *Time* and to the over $20,000 income bracket, which, as she herself has said, makes her a serious writer. Twenty thousand dollars, like fifty million Frenchmen, cannot be wrong. Still, what made *Mary, Mary* moderately endurable for me was some good acting, especially from John Cromwell, and Joseph Anthony's devastatingly ingenious direction.

What to say of *The Devil's Advocate*? A play that treats sympathetically the Jews, the Catholic church, pederasts, promiscuous women, and alcoholics, clearly has all of today's most powerful pressure groups behind it and can make light of the objection that an interesting situation is treated in it with the utmost banality and ineptitude. However, the fact that this adaptation of a novel by Morris L. West was written by one of our very worst playwrights, and directed by one of our very worst directors, both of whom happen to be Dore Schary, may outweigh the advantage of the aforementioned allies.

The two main export articles of Bengal are its tigers and Tagores. The trouble with the latter is that, though almost as loud, they lack the former's bite. Sir Rabindranath's *The King of the Dark Chamber*, given at the Jan Hus Playhouse with fanciful trappings, enthusiastic staging, and vehement performances, is no exception: its platitudes are as pale and profuse as was the beard of that Indian sage. Under Western eyes, these mystic profundities (even when they are played, as a third of this play is, in almost pitch dark) shine with the unmistakable glow of tinsel. A case may be made, I think, for Tagore's folksy lyric poetry; his philosophic drama is elementary as philosophy and exiguous as drama.

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Lack of space compels me to postpone discussion of Edward Albee's dishearteningly bad twin bill now at the York Playhouse, and of a few other plays on and off Broadway that, to some degree, suffer from the same malady. But at least I can end on a cheerful note: Jack Richardson's *Gallows Humor* at the Gramercy Arts is, despite a certain schematism and overstatement, amusing, literate, and, in its second half, a substantial piece of tragicomedy: as when a ludicrous Othello, white of face and liver, tries to strangle his domineering Desdemona; when he inquires pleadingly whether she isn't at last finding it difficult to breathe, she answers, all choked up with mirth, "This is as close as we have come to sex in years." The difference between Richardson and Albee—to disentangle names that are often carelessly bracketed—is that Richardson is not a perennial, self-indulgent, compulsive autobiographer. Though he has yet to write something as furibundly poetic as *Zoo Story,* his intellectual equipment, schooling, and self-discipline will never permit him to plummet to the level of Albee's subsequent plays. Equipped with George L. Sherman's perceptive direction and inexhaustibly creative performances by Julie Bovasso and Gerald Hiken, *Gallows Humor* offers an authentically new twist on the old theme of life-in-death and death-in-life—even if the twist is that of a rope around our necks.

B. H. HAGGIN

Ballet and Music Chronicle

AFTER HEARING THE PIANIST Van Cliburn only on records I had an opportunity to observe him in action at the rehearsals of a performance of Prokofiev's Concerto No. 3 in which he not only played the solo part but conducted the Symphony of the Air. The complete adequacy and honesty of Cliburn's playing—in the sense of its doing exactly what needed to be done, no less and no more, to achieve an unfailing rightness of plastic proportion and coherence in the shaping of the musical phrase and the larger structure—had been moving to hear in the recorded performances; and at these rehearsals there was a similar adequacy and honesty in the operation at the keyboard that produced the musical rightness one heard. One observed it also in Cliburn's work with the orchestra to achieve now the phrasing, now the balance, now the exact gearing of piano and orchestra, that he wanted; and it was interesting to observe the orchestra's seriousness and concentration in

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response to his unaffected competence, and the beautiful playing it did for him.

It is clear from this performance of the Prokofiev concerto and the recorded performance of the Schumann concerto that if Cliburn continues to play much bad music it is not because he doesn't care for and know how to play good music. I think it is rather because the Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1 and Rachmaninov No. 3, the Brahms Concerto No. 2 and Liszt Sonata in B minor, that he has been playing are some of the works he was taught to regard as monuments of the piano repertory and still accepts as such.

The pianist's standard repertory includes those works; the opera company's standard repertory includes *La Gioconda, Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci,* the Puccini operas; and so the Metropolitan year after year presents *La Bohème, Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca,* and this year lavished an expensively spectacular production on *Turandot,* in which the essential Puccini trashiness is slicked up with technical sophistication. Having heard *Turandot* once a few years ago, I felt about it as Bernard Shaw felt about Brahms's Requiem—that listening to it is one of the sacrifices which shouldn't be demanded twice from any man; and so I cannot report on the details of the Metropolitan's production. Nor did I think there was any need of investigating how the Metropolitan had produced Von Flotow's *Martha,* which I doubt that a major opera company would produce today even in Germany. With *Turandot, Martha,* Verdi's *Nabucco* and the Shostakovitch version of Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov,* and on the other hand only Donizetti's *L'Elisir d' Amore* and Gluck's *Alceste,* the Metropolitan's novelties this year seem to me to have set a record for poor judgment and taste.

The American Opera Society concluded its season with Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda,* a later work than *Norma* and *La Sonnambula,* with the characteristic beautiful melodic writing that effloresces into enormously difficult coloratura passages. And the singing of this music by the soprano Joan Sutherland, exhibiting the extraordinary vocal powers it calls for, made the performance a sensational event. Her voice didn't have the ear-ravishing sensuous beauty of some other soprano voices of today, being in fact lusterless in its low register and no more than agreeably bright higher up; but her mastery of it was such that it executed the spectacular florid passages with a seemingly effortless ease, and in addition a musical grace and style, that were breathtaking. Though the occasion was mostly Sutherland's, it also offered beautiful and expressive singing by another new soprano, Marilyn Horne, and good singing by the tenor Richard Cassilly; but Enzo Sordello's baritone voice, when he pushed it up in volume, was dry and had a strong vibrato. Nicola Rescigno conducted efficiently.

The big event of the New York City Ballet's brief spring season was Balanchine's new work *Electronics,* to a composition by Remy Gass-

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mann utilizing the sounds produced by the Studio Trautonium, the electronic musical instrument invented by Oskar Sala. What was striking about these electronically produced sounds was their new timbres, varying from eerie to thunderous; and what Gassmann produced with them was, to my ear, not a work of any musical interest but a soundtrack suitable for the science-fiction fantasy that David Hays's glittering crystalline scenery and the tight-fitting white costumes with glittering gold and silver hair created the appearance of. I put it this way because the movements of the choreography were not those of a new synthetic dance vocabulary devised, according to John Martin in *The Times,* as an analogy to the synthetic musical vocabulary, and capable of being taken as the movements of beings in a science-fiction world. Instead they were more of what one had seen in other recent works of Balanchine; and one could say that facing the same fact that had faced him in *Episodes,* he had dealt with it in the same way. That fact was the configuration of the human body, which, in *Episodes,* he could not destroy and reduce to the disjecta membra analogous to the fragmentation of Webern's music, but could only subject to grotesque distortions. And it was this grotesquerie that one saw again in Violette Verdy's solo to Gassmann's electronic sounds; also one saw adagios like the one of Diana Adams and Arthur Mitchell in *Agon,* in which this time Adams and Jacques d'Amboise (or Conrad Ludlow) went through even more complicated erotic entanglements whose difficulty became obtrusive; and on the other hand one saw Edward Villella do leaps, turns and entrechats that he would have done in a ballet to music of Tchaikovsky. Though all these were of course contrived with Balanchine's authoritative expertness and ingenuity, they did not, for me, add up to one of the especially treasurable Balanchine achievements; and I would say the whole idea was one of his mistakes.

In addition Balanchine revived four episodes of *Ivesiana,* the 1954 work to pieces of music by Charles Ives. The first of these, *Central Park in the Dark,* beginning and ending slowly in a modern idiom that made no coherent musical sense to me, and breaking into ragtme for a few moments, provided the sound-track for the slow entrance and swaying movements of the corps, the powerful metaphors of an episode of sexual violence, executed by Patricia McBride and Francisco Moncion, and the slow withdrawal of the corps. *The Unanswered Question*—strings continuing with quiet chords, while at intervals a trumpet repeated the same phrase, and at other intervals flutes broke into agitated exclamations—performed a similar function for a striking episode in which Allegra Kent entered standing on the shoulders of four boys who caught her when she fell, passed her around their bodies and moved her in other ways out of the reach of Deni Lamont, who dragged himself after her. My impression is that in 1954 the boy on the ground never succeeded in touching her; but this time she was delivered once, rolled up in a ball, into his arms for a moment and withdrawn before

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being raised to the standing position in which she was carried out, with Lamont dragging himself after her. The ragtime of *In the Inn* was the basis for an episode, brilliantly danced by Diana Adams and Arthur Mitchell, in which the style of Negro jazz dancing was subjected to distortions that seemed to me to have been made even more amusingly eccentric and grotesque, and more erotic, than in 1954. And with *In the Night,* reminiscent of *Central Park in the Dark,* the dancers entered from both sides slowly on their knees, and continued to move across the stage in this strange way until the curtain fell.

Ivesiana was part of a "Twelve-Tone Night" whose music—first Ives's, then Stravinsky's for *Agon,* then Webern's for *Episodes,* then Schuller's for *Modern Jazz*—made the program wearisome (one noted that it drew a small audience). *Episodes* brought the first appearance of Allegra Kent after her maternity leave; and in this piece, tightly held and manipulated by Magallanes, she looked and performed well. But in the second movement of *Symphony in C* a few nights later, and again in *Divertimento No. 15,* she exhibited a distressing change in appearance and insecurity in execution; and it was not until later performances of these works that one saw again the former exquisite image and completely achieved delicacy of style.

Villella was given the Moncion part in Robbins's *Afternoon of a Faun,* with McBride in the part danced originally by Tanaquil LeClercq and later by Kent; and with them the piece now became one about two sweet young innocents, which didn't say what it had said when one had seen two evidently knowing youngsters begin a movement of emotional involvement that ended each time in their turning to see how they looked in the mirror. I was left wishing I could see the piece with Moncion and Kent again; and I had a similar wish about Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*: Villella's appearance of a young innocent and his agility are assets in the earlier scenes of this work; but he doesn't have in the later scenes the power of presence and projection, and in the scene after the despoilment in particular the feeling for continuity of tension and flow of movement, that Moncion brought to them.

The Moiseyev Dance Company of Moscow, on its second visit, brought again mass-formation numbers featuring Rockette-like line dancing and the glide that makes the dancers look as though they were on wheels; and virtuoso folk dancing, now superb in its power in slow tempo, as in the *Village Idyl* danced by Irina Konyeva and Boris Petrov, now breathtaking in its acrobatic brilliance in fast tempo, as in the concluding *Gopak* danced by a large group. And this time the company presented as an encore a take-off on rock 'n roll in which the choreographer's and dancers' powers of observation and recreation had one amazed and convulsed. The piece, which is not considered part of the company's repertory and has had only a few performances in Moscow, probably had a different effect on its audiences there.

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As for Ballet Theater, the rising of the curtain for Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* brought the first shock of the garish new costumes; then came the successive shocks of the performance, as the technical and stylistic inadequacy of Toni Lander revealed itself in an operation which was made grotesque and ludicrous by the airs and gestures that pretended to the grandness and grace and charm she lacked; as Royes Fernandez executed his virtuoso solos without virtuoso brilliance; and as the corps went through its formations without the exactness and clarity they called for. One writhed at the thought of how this travesty of Balanchine's lovely and distinguished work must have impressed the Russians and West Europeans who saw it last summer. On the other hand Dania Krupska's new *Points on Jazz,* to engaging music by Dave Brubeck, offered an excellent performance by Scott Douglas, Elizabeth Carroll, Sally Wilson and the corps; but it was wasted on the arty banalities spiced with sensational acrobatics that had Igor Moiseyev sitting up and forward in his seat with alert interest. Mr. Moiseyev was content to sit back in his seat during *Grand Pas,* Frederic Franklin's restaging of the last scene of the 1946 Balanchine reconstruction of *Raymonda* (which Balanchine made into his *Pas de Dix*); though this piece brought the only excitingly great moments I can report—those in which Erik Bruhn performed his feats of virtuosity with brilliance and elegance. Maria Tallchief's assured competence was the more impressive for what one had just seen Toni Lander do; but her movements didn't have the lovely fluidity they used to have.

Bernard Shaw's *How to Become a Musical Critic*[1] adds some of his hitherto uncollected writings on music to what was issued in the thirties in *London Music in 1888-1889* and *Music in London 1890-94.* This exhibited a combination of remarkable critical perception and literary brilliance; and the new volume has Shaw's very first reviews, written in 1876-77, in which we discover that at the age of twenty he wrote without the literary brilliance but with much the same critical perception. Already he was able to observe that Costa didn't have "that highest faculty of a conductor, which consists in the establishing of a magnetic influence under which an orchestra becomes as amenable to the *bâton* as a pianoforte to the fingers"; to report that Wagner's "beat is nervous and abrupt; the player's intuition is of no avail to warn him when it will come; and the tempo is capriciously hurried or retarded without any reason"; and to report on another occasion that "instead of an orchestra conscientiously endeavoring to do justice to a great work, the audience were entertained by the spectacle of a number of individuals bent on displaying the consummate ease with which they could rattle through so simple an affair as a score of

[1] HOW TO BECOME A MUSICAL CRITIC, by *Bernard Shaw.* Edited by *Dan H. Laurence.* Hill and Wang. $5.00.

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Mozart's. There was much vigorous bowing, which was not necessary; there was no delicacy, which was the chief requisite; little attention was paid to the conductor [Arditi], who is never in his element when dealing with high-class German music; and the result was, of course, the comparative failure of the symphony." Then come writings of the early eighties, by which time Shaw was the practiced performer whose perception expressed itself expansively in a rich context of knowledge and humor—who wrote of Liszt's *Dante* Symphony: "It is hard to say what the characteristics of Dante's Hell are. Turmoil, hurry, incessant movement, fire, roaring wind, and utter discomfort are there; but so they are also in a London house when the kitchen chimney is on fire. Convey these by music, and the music will be just as appropriate to the one situation as to the other. To convey nothing else is to miss the characteristic which differentiates the Inferno from any other noisy and unpleasant place; and this is what, as I think, Liszt has done: therefore I call his conception a shallow one." And after Bach's Mass: "The work disappointed some people, precisely as the Atlantic Ocean disappointed Mr. Wilde."

We get additional fine pieces from the period 1888-94; then scattered writings—reviews, articles, addresses, letters—of the years that followed. *London Music in 1888-1889* included the superb 1901 obituary on Verdi and 1917 report on performances of *Il Trovatore* and *Figaro*; but it also included a 1936 footnote in which Shaw repudiated his early correct estimate of Brahms; and the new volume provides further evidence of the decline of Shaw's critical powers in the later years. We find him, for example, in 1910, in dispute with Ernest Newman over Newman's low estimate of Strauss's *Elektra*—a dispute in which Shaw's rhetoric is dazzling but his musical judgment is wrong; in 1932, pronouncing Elgar "the first English composer to produce symphonies ranking with those of Beethoven"; in 1950, citing as British conductors who belonged in the front rank "Adrian Boult, Malcolm Sargent, Basil Cameron, Clarence Raybould, Stanford Robinson, Charles Groves, Ian Whyte, &c. &c. &c., all of them as competent as Furtwängler."

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VERNON YOUNG

Film Chronicle

1. "The Hidden Fortress": Kurasawa's Comic Mode.

ON A VAST ARID PLATEAU with a horizon of forest clump and mountain peak, two all-but-naked clowns of God take their stumbling progress: vagrant peasants, two remnants among a million scattered in the wake of feudal warfare. Exhausted and embittered by their failure to find either glory or bread, unnerved by their own puny hearts and enfeebled wills, they abuse fortune and, with what monkey-spiteful courage they have left, each other—while the slow-tracking camera at their backs makes eavesdroppers of us all. Their impotent scrapping is interrupted by a Something that freezes them with fear; they break off to stare in *our* direction. Abruptly, a hunted figure lurches into the wide-frame view from the right, twisting his painted and sweating face backward at his pursuers. Another instant, as his legs give way while he fumbles with his sole weapon, a bow, they overtake him—a band of mounted warriors which sweeps over and past the victim, spearing him *en route.* The miserable pair now clutch each other in belated need while the horsemen race by, yielding to their own impetus before wheeling to canter back again. Scarcely halting to take in the presence of the terrified couple or the doubled-up samurai, they disdainfully ride away, lances at rest and pennons fluttering. The dust settles over the plain, emptied once more of visible life save those two shuddering monkey-men and the fallen samurai—fallen but not at rest: crumpled up, rather like a roasted beetle, one defensive bow-arm still half extended, trembling faintly in the last spasm before rigor mortis. . . . At this precise moment, a huge cloud-shadow moves over the landscape, like a delayed and barely sensed ripple over one's scalp.

Such is the opening scene of Akira Kurasawa's latest *samurai*-film, in Tohoscope, *Kakushi Toride no San Akunin,* premiered in San Francisco as *The Hidden Fortress* (called *The Wild Flight* in Sweden, where I saw it). With no time to wonder where we are, in what century—or on which planet!—we are sucked into the event like gulls into a cyclone. And the whole film has this air of wild cogent invention, of visual shock and of abrupt outrage. Grandiose, raw, implausible (yet conventional in a sense), *The Hidden Fortress* recapitulates and enlarges, in more than "aspect-ratio" terms, virtually every feature of the so-called entertainment film, as we know it, from the Fairbanks genre to *Treasure of the Sierra Madre,* while incorporating stylistic vestiges of the older Soviet masters and from a host of *samurai*-films. On wide-screen, Kurasawa re-affirms his already manifest command of the witness point and of its collaborative art, editing, as he cuts brilliantly

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from latitudinal compositions to those aligned diagonally, uses depth of field and, as it were, distended surface, and concentrates one's obedient eye no less on two or three figures within engulfing space than on a compactly seething mass in the torch-lighted gloom of an earthworks prison. (The latter shots, by the way, are not reminiscent of any other film sequence I can recall, but they do suggest the monstrous episodes depicting the Chinese coolies packed into the hold of the *Nan-Shan*—in Conrad's *Typhoon*.) No doubt the following scene when these captives erupt from their hole in the ground like angry bees, then swarm down a flight of steps to freedom, was inspired by Eisenstein's Odessa climax—but with no such dialectical purpose and in reverse order: Kurasawa's mass moves *downward;* the Shogunate guards, facing them from below, and nowise as disciplined as the Czar's whitecoats, after emptying one lethal volley into the descending mob, break and run as before a lava flow. (After a dissolve, there's a single impressive shot of the steps, cleared of all but a dozen rag-naked sprawled bodies, glistening like outcroppings of the masonry.)

Kurasawa's modes of action are seemingly inexhaustible, his bravura editing tireless. As a time transition, to indicate rapidly that the two scaramouches have been followed all day by Rokurota, who guards the royal gold they've stumbled onto, he projects two successive frames of their heads against a *daylight sky*, then *cuts directly* into a night background. Better than anyone now working in film, perhaps, he knows when to *hold* his camera position and exploit wide-screen, not simply as a theater tableau but as a magnitude wherein movement is never absent and space is viable. He frames compelling laterals of horsemen with pennants crossing a distant bridge, from both ends and with variant pace, catches a line of premonitory banners coming up over the brow of a plateau like hawks to the kill, takes travelling shots of a panting race through underbrush or of a horseback pursuit at blurring speed (which goes back to Ermler's *Peasants,* notably, and might have been Kurasawa's source for the same effect in his *Rashomon*). He involves those sons of Thersites, the two peasants, in marvellous excursions of fatigue, cupidity, false courage, fright, sly desperation and giggling lust, each a gem of grotesquerie and broken rhythm, enforced by Masuro Sato, whose accompanying score is a fantasia of staccato whistles, hardware squeals and groans, skipping flute melodies. Throughout the action, mainly unified by the trek of four characters bearing gold concealed in bundles of firewood, Kurasawa's sense of the exact faltering gasp and shift of weight, the side-steps of momentum and recovery, is infallible. Which makes more astonishing the information that he once envied Toyoda for that director's *physiological* emphasis. All the evidence we have defines Kurasawa as perhaps the *most physical* director in the history of the movies!

This, alone, may be thought of as a drawback if we're expecting another multi-level masterpiece of the *Rashomon* order. In *Seven Sam-*

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urai (The Magnificent Seven), which I don't see as the outstanding achievement critical opinion would make it, the exclusively kinetic emphasis vitiated, or just replaced, an implied interior drama (relating to the hero) never conveyed. However, I'm prepared to acknowledge that I've overstated the force of such an implication—in this case. But not in *Ikiru,* where Kurasawa's rage for excess was a seriously distracting indulgence. The moral crisis of a dying man who in his last pitiful months achieves the selfless life (even as he recognizes how little of the self he has ever asserted), should have emerged as uncluttered as the chiming of a clock-tower (if not without overtones) or as De Sica's *Umberto D.* But Kurasawa couldn't resist the impulse, especially in the Tokyo-at-night scenes (which *are* apocalyptic) and in the Shavian epilogue, to prove again his inordinate virtuosity. In retrospect I will see only that little man, dead in the swing in the empty playground: all else remaining to my mind's eye will be a profusion of effects—as if the little man had been abandoned not only by the impinging and heedless world but also by Kurasawa; as if, in fact, like a cat with a broken mouse, Kurasawa had quickly dropped him upon being diverted by other stimulants to his feral eye, an analogy to which I shall return.

The Hidden Fortress, a less ambitious venture, to be sure, is more consistently adhered to. Like *Seven Samurai* or, from what report insists, the feudal-Japan *Macbeth (Throne of Blood)* of Kurasawa, this film is relentlessly exterior: a tall tale—*jidai-geki,* if I know how to read my Anderson and Richie—wherein our two vagrant fools, Matashichi and Tahei, are prodded into being the muleback saviours of a princess-in-flight by her loyal ex-general, Rokurota. This superman, emblematically dignified and infinitely resourceful, engineers the strategy which saves all four, despite the truant efforts of the pair to cheat him and escape. At the adventure's end he rewards them with a single plate of gold which, depending on whether their innate avarice or their rudimentary wisdom gets the upper hand, will allow them to live munificently ever after. As a morality of the proto-human utilized by a disciplined elite, the story is no doubt open to complaint from those who consider themselves too sophisticated for delight in such fables. I wonder if dissenters on these grounds are willing to ask themselves honestly if the latest capers of Elia Kazan, John Ford or Stanley Kramer are any more worldly or if, to take hats-in-the-air examples, *A Place in the Sun* or *Look Back in Anger* say anything more pregnant about man's management of his destiny? It is fashionable and probably right—for us in our time and place—to assume that a work of art which gets beneath the skin and bone of its subject is superior to one which doesn't. Yet we may be withholding deserved praise by laboring the distinction too strictly and in un-historical terms. *The Hidden Fortress* is definitive of its kind and not to be identified with the latest western or ben-hurern: it honors the flow of events and quietly predicates an ethic.

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I saw the film in a three-week period during which I also saw three European movies unsurpassed by any shown this season: Bernhard Wicki's *The Bridge,* Truffault's *The 400 Blows* and Bergman's crowning masterpiece, *Jungfrukallan* (*The Virgin Spring*). These, the last-named two especially, come from depths of compassion, from articulated sensibility and power which place them, for psychological man, beyond relevant comparison with any external-adventure film, no matter how vividly related. Even with this acknowledgement, I find they did not, by contrast, *reduce* the Kurasawa film, as they would have any meretricious item of a similar category. And I believe that film criticism almost everywhere has failed a discrimination when relegating the better *samurai*-film. Conceivably the just distinction here is not between Art and Entertainment, a falsely puritan terminology anyway, but between tragic and comic modes, in that broad reading urged by Susanne Langer's summary of dramatic forms (see *Feeling and Form,* Chapters 18 and 19). Tragedy is equated with guilt and expiation, comedy with vanity and exposure. "Tragedy is the image of fate, as comedy is of fortune . . . comedy is essentially contingent, episodic, and ethnic; it expresses the continuous balance of sheer vitality that belongs to society and is exemplified briefly in each individual." For my present inference, *ethnic* is a key word here. There are assumptions in the Kurasawa approach we do well to note, since they underlie the singular depiction of personality which, as much as any visual pyrotechnics, gives *The Hidden Fortress* its character. "The continuous balance of sheer vitality" is here "exemplified briefly" within an elemental social scheme, innocent of our concept, Humanism.

Donald Richie has alleged that when Kurasawa was filming *Rashomon* he sent his actors to circuses and jungle films to observe the behaviour of wild animals. It seems probable that the practise has become chronic: certainly, in *The Hidden Fortress,* Toshiro Mifune (Rokurota) is as much a soft-padding genial tiger as in *Rashomon* he was a lion, *rampant guardant;* Misa Uehara's Princess is patently, even stereotypically, of the domestic-cat family, alternately arch-backed and kittenish —and it's evident I've been unable to describe the peasant couple without recourse to the lower primates! After watching *them* for half an hour you'd not be too surprised by a following-shot fifty feet above the ground, implacably recording their hand-over-hand passage through the tree-tops! And yet they're monkeys by default: they lack the creatures' coordination, while displaying the bad temper, the amoral cunning, the susceptibility to the lure of the moment. (A parenthesis should be expended on the performers, Minoru Chiaki and Kamatari Fujiwara: their self-effacing talent for being wretched, ludicrous or loathsome is exercised beyond all conventional boundaries of naturalism.) These analogies are of the essence. Watch Toshiro Mifune, then listen to Henri Bergson:

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> Even reflexion itself, the secret of man's strength, might look like weakness, for it is the source of indecision, whereas the reaction of an animal, when it is truly instinctive, is instantaneous and unfailing. Even the fact that it lacks the power of speech has served the animal by surrounding it with a halo of mystery. Its silence, moreover, can pass for contempt, as though it had something better to do than to converse with us.

And in *The Hidden Fortress* both Rokurota and the Princess *simulate* speechlessness when it serves their purpose!

I'm but half-way to my point. Kurasawa's instructions to his actors most intrigue me by what they reveal of *his* faculty of observation. Does not Kurasawa view his actors as if he, himself, were a wild animal? —a wild animal who happened to have a flair for cinematography? No fanciful supposition, merely: an animal, more so than Bergson's enlightened man, observes in other animals only their governing qualities. To him, man is simply another species of animal, with habits he is unable to "analyze." Had he a degree of aesthetic consciousness, might he not see men as Kurasawa sees them, from the outside and principally —i.e. as *animals in motion?* To this end, I believe, Kurasawa, no matter what he claims about wanting to be honored for making films of *contemporary* Japan, is inevitably attracted by the feudal setting, wherein social man was more broadly, essentially, ethnically differentiated. And it is just this regressive, if you like, purity of vision which sustains the dramatic tensions of his comedy. When the imperious Princess cries or the stoical Rokurota smiles or the bondsmen cooperate reasonably, an inhibition of impulses has been temporarily released, and the surprise engendered is a basic element—dramatic relief. (Our own puritan heroes and heroines—in Westerns, noticeably—who sulk for seven reels before the fadeout embrace, represent a like instinct for dramatic procrastination. Unfortunately, since they're without style in the interim, they are more often boring than tantalizing—their vacuity is not redeemed aesthetically by compensating mannerisms.)

A cliche is reborn as a perennial mode when vitality confounds a formula. The impassive samurai or loyal retainer unmoved by the sex appeal of the bare-legged (here) Princess he is defending, is a staple of the Japanese period-film. As such, Kurasawa makes no attempt to disguise it. He intensifies it. At one juncture all hope for the fugitive seems lost, in which eventuality death before dishonor, for the Princess above all, is an imperative. Before preparing a final desperate strategy, Rokurota offers her the weapon with which she may have to destroy herself—in a resolute straight-arm gesture. As he does so, their eyes meet and his expression, in a single closeup, is as nakedly complete as any half-dozen reaction shots could ever be: a wordless suffusion of his face with the emotions he has until then suppressed, in which the whole meaning and mettle of the man is made explicit. The human

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soul has entered the landscape where before there was a type, less human than zoological, a personable creature equipped with prepotent powers of endurance and specialized prowess who has otherwise belied the warmth his rarely flashing smile suggested. (No such moment of truth relieved the gymkhana of *Seven Samurai.*) The story recovers, so to speak, from this subjective intrusion and terminates in its no-doubt generic fashion, at the precedent level of dispassionate continuity. But by such touches—in this instance a momentarily piercing recognition of the nobility which crouches in the cage of the heart—Kurasawa restores to man the quality that individualizes him, and reaffirms the actual as a vital ingredient of the unbelievable.

2. On Film and Films.

Four of these books[1] are connected, if not united, categorically. James Agee's scenarios have a bearing on the others because the author, a poet-journalist, whose most secure claim on the memory was established in film criticism, entered the film-making arena. I'm in major agreement with Norman N. Holland's estimate of Agee as critic (see THE HUDSON REVIEW, Spring, 1959) and I find Opus 2 an embarrassment. An Agee cult has arisen, with New York its temple, founded by those who felt guilty because Agee died young, as general measure has it, and perhaps because they hadn't been as kind to him as they might have been. (There, but for the grace of Time . . .). I know. I was around. I saw the same thing happen to Jackson Pollock. How does one sensibly approach the publication of five scenarios, three of which have seen the light of projection, when the aura surrounding their publication (note the "Lycidas" tone of the jacket testimonies) is out of all scale with their importance in the world of motion pictures? Those filmed are already in a different category from the ones which haven't been; the latter invite either *literary* criticism under special conditions or speculation about works whose total realization has not taken place! To remark on Agee's normally canny instructions for camera movement, witness point and so forth is not high praise: you'd expect a film scenarist to know his business at that end. Regarding the conceptual treatment of the two "uncreated" films, *Noa-Noa* and *The Blue Hotel,* one can only say that in each case the successful execution of their fluctuating vividness depends wholly on a director's final disposition of the shooting script. As a scenario about Paul Gauguin I find *Noa-Noa* didactic and wildly *niveau* and I don't *see* Gauguin or any other char-

[1] KINO: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film, by *Jay Leyda.* Macmillan. $9.50. AGEE ON FILM Vol. II: Five Film Scripts. McDowell, Obolensky. $7.50. MOTION PICTURES: The Development of an Art From Silent Films to the Age of Television, by *A. R. Fulton.* Univ. of Oklahoma Press. $5.00. THEORY OF FILM: The Redemption of Physical Reality, by *Siegfried Kracauer.* Oxford. $10.00. THE THREE FACES OF THE FILM: The Art, The Dream, The Cult, by *Parker Tyler.* Thomas Yoseloff. $6.95.

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acter in it; as a prose draft for a film it's inordinately wordy and self-indulgent. Conspicuous in this script and in that for *The Blue Hotel* is the tendency, rabid in Agee's reviews when he *loved* a movie, to overstate from fear that the subject or milieu could yield insufficient importance unaided by rhetoric—the more so when he apotheosized children, the rural life or the asocial man.

Huck Finn become self-conscious is a familiar American hazard in contemporary American literature, a prolonged consequence of the frontier reaction to culture, wherein the sentimental and the over-urgent are inevitable components. Agee was always safer with Fun than with the Idea. *The Bride Who Came to Yellow Sky* was incarnated as a film (one part of *Face to Face*) that endeared by its regional humor and its modestly contrived period characterizations. *The Blue Hotel* is loaded with cues for Significance, examplified verbally in the Easterner's poor-man's-Donne tag-line, "Everything is a collaboration. Everybody is responsible for Everything." How can a man *write* a line like that? Or not think better of it the morning after? John Huston's preface expels the same air. He's asked to introduce five film scenarios. He writes a love letter to James Agee. Read Grierson on Flaherty or Peter Ustinov on Max Ophuls. Then read Huston. It will tell you a lot about the film profession and its peripheries in the United States.

So will Fulton's book, in another part of the library. The grandiose sub-title, "Development of an Art," et cetera, whether offered by the author or imposed by the publisher, is preposterous. *Motion Pictures* is in part simply an *introduction* to the basic development of film narration, re-emphasizing the pioneer contributions of Melies, Porter, Griffith, Eisenstein, with no discovery of any other pioneers nor a single fact or insight of the author's own. These chapters are followed by exercises in comparison (Play-, Novel-, Short Story-into-Film) which seem to represent Fulton's preferred English-teacher area of operation. The terminal section on Television is a gratuity, a gesture toward Keeping Up and saying nothing. Without the assumption that the reader whom Fulton had in mind was a Freshman student (of film) his project must be considered an insolent rehearsal of material researched and restated a hundred times. The Freshman, in no position to complain, will no doubt find this ABC of recapitulation a convenient handbook until he's old enough, film-wise, to cope with its presumptions. He will not be bored by Fulton's pedestrian exposition; he will not question the author's need for (or award of) funds from Purdue University and the Ford Foundation for "research" which could be done in three weeks at the MMA Film Library; he will not pause to wonder why, if research was the foundation of this enterprise, Fulton, too, remains ignorant after five years of the claims then made by James Card (Films Curator, Eastman House) for the primary importance of August Blom's *Atlantis* (Denmark, 1913), an achieved film narrative predating Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* by two years. And he will not be

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astounded that by this time anyone with half of Fulton's pretensions still believes that Robert Flaherty made the Michelangelo film, *The Titan.*[2]

If a hypothetical freshman is indispensable for giving legible focus to Fulton, a Ph.D. candidate is comparably the test-case for Kracauer. Only a graduate leashed by four-years-plus of note-taking and neutrality could digest Kracauer's method: headings, sub-headings and sub-sub-headings; definition and re-definition until all the blood of an art has been drained away and replaced by syllogism; pseudo-Socratic correction of one point of view with another until none apparently remains; repetition of analogies which might have been inspiring when first heard did they not alienate respect by importunity (e.g. the Proust-and-his-grandmother vignette); impressive (to the graduate) quotations from Continental criticism to ratify Kracauer's concealed dogma as verity. Kracauer's erudition has, by the way, comical flaws: he reproduces the innocence of Roger Manvell and other film writers in quoting as a D. W. Griffith credo, "The task I am trying to achieve is above all to make you see." I don't know if Griffith claimed parenthood but obviously this is a contraction of the famous Conrad sentence in his preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus.*

Of Kracauer's theme: why physical reality is in greater need of "redemption" than the reality of imagination is a question answered only by indirection. The flux of *contemporary* phenomena gives Kracauer the most satisfying movie experience: ergo, this is THE movie experience. His arguments against history (i.e. the past) and "fantasy" as movie subjects are at best derived from the same fallacy as Lamb's objections to Shakespeare on stage (obviously Lamb never saw an adequate Shakespeare performance). Kracauer quotes one Albert Laffay, to support his monomaniac dislike of the "history" film.

> "Take, for instance, a picture of the siege of Paris in '71. . . . All is perfect. What prevents me from admiring? . . . One cannot help feeling that if the camera were displaced, however slightly, to the right or the left, it would only chance upon the void or the bizarre paraphernalia of a studio."

Idiotic, of course, since the presumption might be applied to *any*

[2] This subject is more than footnoteworthy. Among recent mentions of the film, Arthur Knight's, in *The Liveliest Art,* identifies it merely as a film made by Kurt Oertel in Italy. Kracauer, in the book reviewed herewith, relegates its credits to his index, as follows: ". . . the American version of Kurt Oertel's *Michelangelo* (1940, Switzerland)." Why so arch? Knight and Kracauer, like many others, know the facts, even if they can't swallow them. The late Kurt Oertel was no Swiss, and his film was made at the express wish of Reichsminister Goebbels. The confiscated material comprised, I believe, some two and a half hours running time from which the 1950 version was edited to an hour—a fact (unknown to or unacknowledged by Parker Tyler, incidentally) which should qualify anyone's opinion, pro or con, of the film we know as *The Titan.*

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non-documentary film. And Kracauer allows exceptions, sometimes without knowing it; for *Rashomon,* which he admires, is among other things a period film. However, willing suspension of disbelief is not a cardinal requirement of the Kracauer cinema; neither is a sense of humor. Having listed sundry technical ways of establishing fantasy—multiple exposure, superimposition, distorting mirrors *und so weiter*—Kracauer resumes: "It should be noted that not all fantasies can be produced this way. Winged angels, for instance, must be staged; and they inevitably look stagy because of the wings added to their natural appearance." This man would kill Rome for you if you listened to much of that! I'll take Malraux on the rumor that Tintoretto modelled clay figurines of divers and swimmers:

> He turned the divers into angels; angels were what he needed—and the dealings between the artist and the world of things always consists in his taking divers and turning them into the angels he has need of.

Kracauer has no need of them and resents any enlightened contemporary who might have. One obsession looms through his smokescreen of impartial analysis and gyroscopic liberalism: he is terribly afraid of the idea of God (I use the term broadly to cover film conceptions involving metaphysical assumptions, religious symbolism or mood, use of monomyth), terribly anxious to Explain Everything—away. Constantly he inhibits his finest insights with contradictory panic. Following a number of approving references to Fellini's critical realism, he must have overheard whispers that from *La Strada* on, notably, Fellini's films can be explicated in metaphysical, even Christian terms. Well, the poor man couldn't go back and rewrite all the references, but he could safeguard them! So on p. 298 he unties all his compliments by again enlisting someone else's abuse, an incomprehensible (to me) statement from Erich Auerbach on Virginia Woolf—"common to almost all of these novels is haziness, vague indefinability of meaning . . . uninterpretable symbolism"—to which Kracauer adds the incredible parenthesis—"(About the same might be said of any Fellini film)."

The Frightened Mind which needs must veer and tack to accommodate or contest the Latest Opinion is beyond my ken. This double-jointed performance of Kracauer is of a piece with his initial pretense of subscribing to no gestalt while he's dying to roll the universe up into a ball, an empty one. With his last chapter, "Film in our Time," he tries to, in as fumbling as excursion into general ideas as ever Panofsky attempted, with special apprehensive reference to Arnold Toynbee who is guilty of trying to make sense out of history and of predicting a return to Christianity. And how does this scandal apply to Film in our Time? *Videlicet*: for Kracauer the film-art *ding an sich* is the atomized reality it depicts. His book-intelligence presuades him we live in a

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meaningless world (in a devaluated society is perhaps what he should be saying) where the only virtues are the esthetic properties of the observed fragments, something the film can prodigiously recreate. There's no mistaking his drift: *he likes the world that way;* it makes for a safer commitment. Meaning he associates with order, order with authority, authority with the single form of it he has experienced—tyranny—which scared him into writing *From Caligari to Hitler.* Which is why this later book exclusively deals in the analytic method, concentrates on process and detail. If the socially critical films Kracauer admires—such as *Umberto D* and *Cabiria's Nights*—have *other* dimensions, he's not interested. Fellini has clearly given him trouble with his transcendent power of metaphor, intensified and enlarged until in *La Dolce Vita* its incandescence is spectacular, illuminating infernally a microcosm of our hysteria with the very glamor which is the film's chief object of ridicule and of pity. But Kracauer hadn't seen this film. How far could he go with it by the restricted route of "physical reality"?

If my standpoint vis-a-vis *Theory of Film* is but half consonant with Kracauer's intention I've thereby unfairly dispensed with the positive, academic uses of his book. I don't honestly see how anyone who has safely surpassed the logic-chopping province can enlarge his awareness by a sustained reading but I do concede that there are single passages which construe genres of the film with keen and sensitive comprehension. To the browser I'll recommend especially most of Kracauer's suggestive discourse on film music, his summary of the sociology of The Spectator, never done better, and many of his comments on Experimental Film and The Theatrical Story (Chapters 10 and 12).

Jay Leyda's history of the Russian film is also for the graduate, the seminar specialist who wants to eat his chronology and have it, too, someone in search of data: titles, dates, production staffs, editors, cameramen and actors, together with resumes of as many films as possible with a minimum of opinion expressed by the author. History is a documented record: conclusions are another subject or two (aesthetics, criticism, political philosophy). The demanding student may not in fact know how lucky he is to have *Kino* available, since accurate film-fact reporting is not a commonplace event. (Incidentally, Leyda is one of the few film researchers in the world, perhaps, who admits not having seen a given movie!) With the aid of Macmillan, *Kino* displays in sequence an efficiency of organization unique in any field of publication. Footnotes elaborating or corroborating the text are placed at the bottom of the page where one may scan them en route like film subtitles, those denoting bibliography are numbered for back-page reference, listed by chapter. Appendices include not only an immensly convenient year-by-year production list but also such invaluable essay statements as Maxim Gorky's shocked but enthralled reception of the Lumiere films in 1896. ("It is terrifying to see, but it's the movement of shadows, only of shadows!"). Leyda's narrative text, by sheer weight

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and momentum of the fateful events which have all but constituted the prevailing subject of the Russian-Soviet film, rolls on like a tank that churns up and ultimately levels everything in its path.

And here I must abandon my subterfuge of a deputy-student; I'm obliged to protest in my own person that this montage defeats one's grasp of particulars. The tank splinters trees, destroys habitations, grinds the bodies and features of countless men, creating a landscape in which every item is as conspicuous as another—therefore indistinguishable. At Chapter 14, "Witnessed Years," Leyda offers his diary notations from the Thirties "without apologies." Why without apology when they add another spate of centripetal references and initials-dropping to be sorted, deduced or skipped by the already burdened reader? . . . "Letter from Jack tells me that Lincoln was thrown out of a *Thunder over Mexico* showing. . . ." (Who is this Lincoln and what did he want?). And this is typical of a profusion of supposedly provocative morsels. Foreign Films shown in Moscow, 1926, are calendared at one point: why '26 rather than '25 or '27 except that Leyda happened to have a record for that year? Any data is useful for someone but I submit as bad pedagogy the congestion of historical narrative with unsubordinated minutiae, especially since the back pages have been designed for compulsive overflows. These excesses are negotiable, to be sure, by any reader who treats the book as a *reference* and not as a history to be read easily overnight.

A graver charge, from my viewpoint, is Leyda's unremitting propaganda by default: no judgment of his material because the material is ultimately inseparable (like Kracauer's for a slightly different reason), all grist for the Soviet mill which is bigger than partisanship and beyond critical quibbling. Am I to understand that the fear of Red-baiting will now prevail upon critics and other readers to be as indifferent to the cost of the Soviet film as Leyda—for whom all the purges, the "disappearances," the distortions and lies, the voiding of intellects like those of Ermler, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko, are rapturiously to be accepted as errors subsumed by the destiny of Matushka who is forever as holy as she is forgivable? Leyda never says it: he frames Benjamin Franklin to say it (!) with a chapter-head quotation which originally had excused the temporary tyranny of a *republic*. After War II, when Soviet Russia was ostensibly unified by its victories, secure in its national-socialist survival, appeased by devouring as much of central Europe as the Yalta Agreement was eager to ladle-feed it with, censorship was as throttling as ever. And after 33 years the old Muscovite despotism of spying and counter-spying and the holier-than-thou world manifestoes are no nearer elimination. Co-existence is one thing, servility another; the blandness with which Leyda assimilates the political vetoes and the cinematic mediocrity is as chilling as his earlier passing regrets for the expunging of Vladimir Nielsen's credits or the execution of Meyerhold "for reasons that are now admitted to have been false."

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Recently I heard the ancient (he must be!) Gordon Craig interviewed for BBC's Third Program on his days with the Moscow Art Theatre. When Meyerhold was mentioned he brightened audibly; into the trembling old voice came a surge of affection as he spoke of Meyerhold's intelligence and his "splendid personality." The interviewer observed in passing what Craig had apparently not learned, that Meyerhold had been "liquidated." A deathly silence; then the quavering speech summoned a bugle resonance as it exclaimed, "Did they destroy *him? May they be damned!*" . . . There spoke a human voice, of the kind Leyda evidently hears only when the object of its sympathy has been politically screened. Noticeably, if not seriously disturbed by the ebb of Soviet film sense in the post-War II period, he extols a handful of latterday efforts, among them the soap-opera chauvinism of *Our Courtyard* and *The House I Lived In* (to which I'd add the well-acted but self-congratulatory *One Man's Fate* and *Ballad of a Soldier*), declaring with double ambiguity, "The decade need not be ashamed of. . . ." et cetera. Need not be ashamed of??? Just answer the implicit question, please. Might it [they] *take pride?* . . . I re-insist that where Leyda's book is cinebiographical and bibliographical, where, in short, it is exempt from reproach by human dignity, it is irreplaceable ("the decade need not be ashamed"?), and I repeat my praise of the format: the jacket picture is highly appropriate, a still from *The Youth of Maxim,* wherein a generic hero clinging to a lamp-post distributes leaflets in defiance of a mounted White Guard. I have only one improvement to suggest. With no detriment to the visual effectiveness, the dominating title could easily be transposed—from *Kino* to *Ikon.*

When film-talk in America cuts loose from the academy, journalism or political pleading, it's likely to swing untethered in an empyrean of special jargon and super-snobbish disdain of any film adventure lacking elements of the esoteric. Parker Tyler's is a curious case. He can write as well as any film critic in English if he first hermetically seals his subject, if, specifically, he restricts himself to an aesthetic dissertation, preferably semantic, wherein consistency of definition is the only requirement. In such a frame he is unsurpassed for writing a kind of poetic logic at an altitude of reference we should like to see taken more for granted. Unhappily this gift, on the long stretch, appears to be conferred by dexterity, unsustained by intellectual coherence or integrity of vision. He has written some acute psychoanalyses of Hollywood themes, always at the brink of absurdity. When he takes the step from theory to instance, when he lets air in, the jig is up—he is animated by perversity. Like Jekyll, he can no longer find his way back from angel to diver. The present volume is an alarming illustration: the further one reads the more one realizes that the man has no center to him. He'll say *anything* if he thinks it sounds clever (I don't say plausible—he enjoys being *im*plausible); he's a past master of substituting

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his own hallucinations (a word he favors) for those of the film in question without caring in the least if the result tells you anything whatever about that film, for he rarely distinguishes between the demonstrable and the inferential. He doesn't refrain from the contemptible strategy of declaring that if you resist certain extremes of avant-garde theory and perpetration (these are usually Futurist-1909) you are philistine, yet he tries in vain to place himself at a humanist center by referring at the outset to hypothetical others as "sophisticates" and by asserting that his object is "to hail the movies as the probable saviour of the classic human image in our age"—a proposition that denies the gist of his approach before that statement (1958) and subsequently.

His unnecessary attempt in his preface to bring separately published essays under a uniform outlook is impaired by their patent eclecticism. But the statement that does fairly sum up his continuing concern, despite all detours, is that for him "a film is predominantly the token of a stream of consciousness, dipping waywardly into the unconscious and just as waywardly connecting itself with the unceasing life of mind and body." (So much for the classic human image.) That this may well be *one aspect* of film we'd have no quarrel with if Tyler contented himself with calling it an aspect and interpreting it lucidly. But it's characteristic of his attitude that he speaks of the phenomenology of Film as equivalent to *a film,* that he sees a work of art as unbordered and autonomous, uncontrolled by the artist (a whimsy he forsakes when attacking certain movie travesties of the artist's role), as having not simply characteristics in common with other generic units but as possessing a volition of its own, like a set of conditioned reflexes. Such a bias relieves him from responsibility for respecting the identity of a film director, the cultural context from which the film precisely emerges (subject to the degree of his acquaintanceship) or the visible evidence of its qualities when he has decided it's greater sport by far to repudiate the evidence and remake the movie in his own terms.

Thus, he accompanies stills from Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries* with fanciful discoveries of "Expressionist Gloom" in the former, cast by "concentrated shadow like Munch," and of "concentrated light" in the latter evoking "a post-Impressionist brilliance" a la Bonnard! This is just nonsense which could be tossed off by anyone to characterize any brace of stills one chose. It's irrelevant to either of the films cited, it's irrelevant to any pictorial purpose of Bergman. *Dead of Night* he appreciates with warm affection for its neatly cyclical fascination, then inflates it in order to incorporate the film within the Pirandello world; at the same time he deprecates it as a trick and overlooks the simple probability that the scenario idea derived from the near-at-hand theatre of J. B. Priestley. Similarly his "Myth of the Great Lovers" fails to consolidate certain astute hunches therein by his fortuitous assumption that Valentino, John Barrymore and Garbo had any choice of the roles they played and had deeply ironic

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perceptions of what they were *being* (a likelihood in Barrymore's consciousness only). In "A Modern Fable: Miracle in Milan," he gets increasingly further from an understanding of the film because of his fixed notion that the resemblance between Toto and Mussolini is "too obvious to be overlooked" (like that between Jacques Tati and General de Gaulle?). "*Rashomon* as Modern Art," however, is his most willful achievement in sawing off the limb he sits on. His clarification of the film *qua* film is methodically undertaken and closer to an adequate analysis than any I've read; his exposition is flexible, ethically centered and re-creatively sharp. But he can't leave it alone! It must become Modern Art, he must fake it up with his butterfly mind. The sources and culture content are ignored or violated so that Tyler can instead bring the film into fashionable line with the Art News-Expressionism-Marinetti-and-Freud axis and produce this stupendous anti-climax—

> Another image of Futurist painting renders the angles of air displacement caused by the nose of a racing auto. Such 'displacements' exist in *Rashomon* severally in the respective accounts of a physical action deriving from one main impetus: the desire to possess a woman.

—an amalgam of space-time-sex I defy anyone to elucidate and relate accurately to a motion picture made by Kurasawa!

Coming - - in THE HUDSON REVIEW:

FRANK BUTLER: The Watchers in the Dark
DENIS DONOGHUE: Poetry and the Behavior of Speech
HERBERT GOLD: I Want a Sunday Kind of Love
ANTHONY HECHT: Behold the Lilies of the Field
IRVING HOWE: T. E. Lawrence: the Problem of Heroism
JOSEPH KERMAN: Aaron Copland
RICHMOND LATTIMORE: Athens Letter
BEN MADDOW: In a Cold Hotel
MARVIN MUDRICK: Colette and Strether
SONYA RUDIKOFF: Great American Painters

Poems by ROBERT BLY, HAYDEN CARRUTH, JAMES DICKEY, GALWAY KINNELL, CHARLES TOMLINSON, WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS, JAMES WRIGHT, ETC.

Chronicles and Reviews by PATRICK CRUTTWELL, BENJAMIN DE MOTT, PAUL GOODMAN, B. H. HAGGIN, NORMAN N. HOLLAND, BERNARD M. W. KNOX, JOHN SIMON, LOUIS SIMPSON, ETC.

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MARVIN MUDRICK

Something to Say[1]

ALL HOUSEWIVES, a freshman theme once noted, fall in three categories; and many novels give the same impression of losing their virtue by the most classifiably commonplace of false moves. Who wants another Adult Western? or even an Adult Western for adults? *Charlie Gallagher, My Love!* promises the lowdown on what the Open Spaces were *really* like, and it begins with an immensely circumstantial literary apparatus: An American tourist, watching a TV western in a Genoese *espresso* bar, becomes interested by the grumbling comments of an ancient woman (" 'It was never like that. I was there. I saw it all —saw it from the beginning with my own eyes!' "), who turns out to be 103 years old and who needs little encouragement to undertake an account of her adventures with a traveling circus in the pioneer West. After all this disheartening preliminary fuss, the novel predictably subsides into another episode of *Gunsmoke,* except more pretentious in its doomfully quiet tableaux and the spastic telegraphese that passes for the talk of unwashed silent men:

> "Sky opens up the eye. All wide open," and he waved his hand. "Clear up north to the lakes. Out west to the foothills of the Rockies. Empty, most empty. Empty as an old spinster's hopes. . . . Big open nothing, waiting for men to fill her up, far down as San Antonio where I come from."

A cowboy, in 1868, says, " 'Ain't going to need but basic English in Morgan's Ferry' "; the high-mettled Italian heroine pensively remarks, about a drunk, that " 'Drink is his only defense against reality' "; a circus clown cries out "passionately, 'And who makes *us* laugh?' "; faces, now and then, "pale visibly." The author is an Englishman, and no

1 CHARLIE GALLAGHER, MY LOVE!, by *Simon Kent.* Macmillan. $3.50. WHICH ONES ARE THE ENEMY?, by *George Garrett.* Little, Brown. $3.95. THE BACHELORS, by *Muriel Spark.* Lippincott. $3.95. STOWAWAY, by *Lawrence Sargent Hall.* Little, Brown. $3.75. THE GLASS BEES, by *Ernst Juenger.* Noonday. $3.75. THE ACROPHILE, by *Yoram Kaniuk.* Atheneum. $3.50. GIVE ME MYSELF, by *Susan Sherman.* World. $3.75. THE CHÂTEAU, by *William Maxwell.* Knopf. $4.95. IN PURSUIT OF THE ENGLISH, by *Doris Lessing.* Simon and Schuster. $3.75. MR LOVE AND JUSTICE, by *Colin MacInnes.* Dutton. $3.50. STAND ON ME, by *Frank Norman.* Simon and Schuster. $3.75. TAKE A GIRL LIKE YOU, by *Kingsley Amis.* Harcourt, Brace. $3.95. THE MAGIC OF THEIR SINGING, by *Bernard Wolfe.* Scribner's. $3.95. REVOLUTIONARY ROAD, by *Richard Yates.* Little, Brown. $4.75.

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linguist: Charlie Gallagher, who speaks "fluent Spanish," informs us that he was " 'brought up on a Mexican *ranchero.*' "

There was, doubtless, an Old West; but by now it lies buried nine levels deep under literary, patriotic, and cinematic platitudes from which a plausible reality can probably never be excavated. There have also been wars, and aftermaths; as well as ex-soldiers with literary inclinations who assume that their knowledgeable recollections, however similar to those of every other painstakingly sensitive young veteran, will somehow patch together into fiction. *Which Ones Are the Enemy?* tries to circumvent the inevitable by taking for its hero an army jailbird and black-market operator; but, career aside, he thinks and talks just like the sensitive, stoical, large-hearted youth that we all fondly observe in our service photos. "The First World War," he says with restrained, smoldering irony. "The one they called the War to End Wars." He shacks up with a B-girl who, full of *echt*-European *joie de vivre* and *dolce far niente,* soon teaches him that love, Continental-style, can be "so good and simple." This earthy female, besides her other talents, occasionally radiates folk-wisdom: " 'He was the first man I loved. When he took me, he was the first. I was a virgin. It's true, the old story, that the first man is always in your heart, the best and the one you love most. Maybe it has to be that way.' " Having to cope day and night with such unplumbable depths, the hero can hardly be blamed for his incapacity at a climactic moment: "I wanted to cry but I didn't have any tears left."

Then there are novels afloat on such purely baseless literary clichés as, for example, Graham Greene's Bitter Mystery. The premises of this particular cloudland are (1) Life is a bitter mystery; (2) It is still bitterer if you are an intelligent Englishman; (3) It is uniquely bitter if you are an intelligent English Roman Catholic; (4) Dogma is bitter, but sinning is better; (5) Curtness and a stiff upper lip are infallible indices of unimaginable anguish (a cherished and antique Anglo-Saxon delusion which the Greeneites adapt for their quasi-theological purposes). Though Mr. Greene himself, who has recently investigated leprosy as one of the more interesting physical states symbolic of fallen man, doesn't leave much room for advances in misery, *The Bachelors* does as well as it can with an intelligent English Roman Catholic suffering from an intractably severe case of epilepsy, the manifestations of which are described with clinical relish. Again like Mr. Greene, Mrs. Spark is a skilful writer capable, when she isn't trying to force her point, of witty and just observations about a variety of unpleasant human phenomena: *The Bachelors,* for instance, presents an imposingly satanic spiritualist whose sidelines are women and the misappropriation of funds. But fiction isn't a very satisfactory means of bringing Aquinas up to date. And life is not, unexaminably, a bitter mystery.

Then there are allegories. When Chaucer or Bunyan decided to write an allegory, he was selecting the simplest and directest and most

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unmysterious possible form to express, through the accepted medium of analogy, an absolute and immediately ascertainable religious truth. As the area of Christian unanimity contracted, the form gradually lost its claim on any absolute truth, it became in fact the vehicle for the expression of powerful individual doubt, as in Melville or Conrad or Kafka. The Christian allegorist proposed to reveal only what had already been authoritatively revealed. The modern allegorist, deprived of pious certainty, and choosing to deprive us of our modern pleasure in the opaque substantialities of fictional events, proposes to reveal a hard-earned, unprecedented, devious, skeptical wisdom; but wisdom is always in short supply. So modern allegory is particularly liable to what James Agee called *rigor artis,* the musclebound will straining for effects beyond its means: it specializes in speculation and aphorism, fine writing and uneasy consciences, a fog of question marks to conceal inadequacies of mind. "And there I was," writes the narrator of *Stowaway,* "and the dead ship, like the curiously impersonal corpse of an abandoned mistress, woke old, intimate, guilty virilities and lusts": the deliberately shocking simile is, on inspection, shocking only in the sterile extravagance of its wilfulness.

The most disturbing fact about *Stowaway* and *The Glass Bees* is that both are, in many of their details, plainly the work of intelligent and thoughtful men; and *The Glass Bees* is also the work of a considerable literary craftsman. Yet in *Stowaway* Mr. Hall's effort to be original is from the outset too exhausting: the book becomes a strange tissue of paraphrase, of literary echoes so banal as to indicate that the author himself would be astounded and embarrassed to recognize their sources—

> In those days I had a habit of speculating on the unknown wasted potential, the hidden talent, the secret virtue—as well as vice—that is never found out because no one really looks for it, and my speculation about Costello was that he would have made a great opera singer but for the accidental ignorance and indifference of himself and people around him. The gift of a Caruso may not be the rare phenomenon it is assumed to be at all; without the fortuitous combination of circumstances, temperament, intelligence, and will to reveal and develop it, many an engineer, chef, or lumberjack may go to his grave with as rare a gift, and the world, you might say, none the wiser but much the poorer, if that means anything.

(The nervous shrug of the last four words means: I ought to be saying something new, and I may not be saying anything at all.) And the entire conception of the novel is so patently, without a glimmer of independent imagination, Conradian—ship, men, discipline, authority, the strengths of weakness and the weaknesses of strength, the bleak indifference of the eternal universe over all—as to suggest, again, a compulsive short-circuit in the author's memory.

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The Glass Bees, on the other hand, occasionally achieves its own, not merely Kafkaesque, air of unascertainable menace. Ernst Juenger is writing against the authentic infernal landscape of the immediate German past; and the automatized new world of the great inventor, Zapparoni—himself a chillingly gentle and paternal figure—is a kind of inescapably spreading Disneyland through whose glass-and-plastic gardens stroll herds of self-righteous, data-fed computing machines:

> My evil star . . . had fated me to be born in times when only the sharply demarcated and precisely calculable were in fashion. There were many days when I had the impression of meeting only prison wardens—wardens, moreover, who voluntarily crowd to these positions, are satisfied with them and enjoy them. "Of course, I am on the Right, on the Left, in the Middle; I descend from the monkey; I believe only what I see; the universe is going to explode at this or that speed"—we hear such remarks after the first words we exchange, from people whom we would not have expected to introduce themselves as idiots. If one is unfortunate enough to meet them again after five years, everything is different except their authoritative and mostly brutal assuredness. Now they wear a different badge in their buttonhole and mention their relationship to another monster; and the universe now shrinks at such a speed that your hair stands on end.

The episode of the bees, however, is anticlimactic and far too long, partly because it looks for a while like a guarantee of further revelations. Juenger does seem to want to prove something grander than his ostensible subject: the point is not, as often in Kafka, that there is no point; and the novel, having offered some imaginative scenes and a good deal of literate Teutonic brooding, ends with a lame and quite unironic endorsement of *gemütlich* domesticity as the only antidote to the present—

> For Teresa I bought a nice summer dress with red stripes, which reminded me of the one in which I had seen her for the first time. It fitted to perfection—I knew her measurements. She had shared many hours with me, mainly the bitter ones.
>
> We went out for dinner; it was one of the days one never forgets. Quite soon the happenings in Zapparoni's garden began to fade in my memory. There is much that is illusory in techniques. But I never forgot Teresa's words, and her smile when she spoke. Now she was happy about me. This smile was more powerful than all the automatons—it was a ray of reality.

The Acrophile must be intended as some sort of allegory too, since its pace is jerky, its plot mixed up, its characters undeveloped, its transitions cloudy, its motives improbable, and its philosophizing wryly portentous. The mildly engaging guilelessness of the hero sees us through some amusing scenes of Jewish family life (though even

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these are quite as likely to be tainted with parochial whimsy); but his obsessive memory of a war-brutality perpetrated on Arabs while he was an Israeli soldier seems a private concern of the author's rather than a metaphor for the novel or a revelation of the hollowness of things.

Give Me Myself exemplifies that school of fiction which sees the novel as the record of a Thrilling Experience. Its heroine has a guilelessness about as engaging as the hero's in *The Acrophile;* like him, she is also the narrator of the novel; but unlike him she is totally unprotected by any caution, sophistication, or worldliness, and her appalling ignorance seems an accurate reflection of the mind of the author herself. The heroine is a coed who attends the summer-session classes of a female Irish (for no reason) literary scholar, to whom is flatly attributed an "overwhelming and awesome genius," and who gives "dynamic and brilliant lectures":

> Suddenly an avalanche of sparkling, extemporaneous and brilliant speech came tumbling, literally tumbling, out of her mouth. . . .
>
> "Since our approach to poetry this summer is going to be mainly in terms of symbol, myth, and metaphor, I think it a good idea if I speak to you today in general terms about archetypal symbolism. These archetypal symbols are essentially communicable symbols. . . . Archetypal symbols, so strongly prevalent in poetry, are important because associations are shared universally by the nature of human existence."

Ah, generous, inflammable youth! Well, anyhow, to go on. The coed falls utterly, idolatrously, and chastely in love with her; for the sheer intellectual delight of her company (" 'Nona, do you know the lines of Campion's 'Rose-checked Laura, Come' . . . mmm? . . . They are lovely things to memorize. . . . They seem so simple and yet . . . yet they are so exquisitely meaningful . . . so hauntingly musical. . .' "), spends all her time and money on the scholar, who turns out to be an incorrigible and suicidal lush; is savagely mistreated by some homosexual friends of hers; abandons her loving parents to follow the great lady to Florence there to witness her last moments of self-degradation. Now it is true, as Herbert Gold says for the dustjacket, that "Dealing with dangerous and ambiguous material, Susan Sherman has composed a remarkably sweet-tempered novel." The novel is also, however, so remarkably naïve, defenseless, and incompetent in attitude and motivation, and most remarkably in its conception of the scholar, that it ought never to have got beyond the teacher's desk in a creative-writing class, which is where this sort of fiction—an honorable private beginning—belongs.

It is a special delight, after these tribulations, to come upon professional work, done with grace and affectionate care, by a novelist who knows exactly what he wishes to do and how he can use the medium to do it. *The Château* is a leisurely, low-keyed, beautifully detailed

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novel: first of all, a touching evocation of an American couple's love affair with France; more troublingly, an account of ultimate incommunicabilities—even against all possible American innocence, discretion, love, and the best will in the world—between persons and peoples. Harold and Barbara Rhodes are an intelligent, well-intentioned young American couple who set out to discover France. What they discover, in the continually surprising company of the French family they meet at the château where they have chosen to stay for a part of their tour, is that judgments are always made too quickly; that the motives of strangers do not hasten to make themselves available for inspection; that differentness is not to be stormed by charm and good will; that to be French is to appear familiar (because human!) but to be in all sorts of prickly and disconcerting ways unalterably not American; that among strangers we are always on sufferance, despite our enormous charm, and that patience for newcomers, outsiders, tourists —however shining our friendly sincerity—will wear suddenly thin; that love—even the most disinterested—is not necessarily reciprocated or even accepted; and that nevertheless to love as intensely, stubbornly, and undemandingly as these Americans love the country which can never adopt them is to make a breach in the wall. None of which suggests Mr. Maxwell's style, which is so largely patterned and so closely woven as to make quotation next to impossible; or his attentive respect for an extraordinary variety of characters and incidents in their richest, most minute, and most enigmatic elaborations.

In Pursuit of the English is another professional job, disarmingly presented in the form of a journal (with presumably very few changes, except of names, from the original journal) by a colonial Englishwoman discovering England, or rather the lower middle-class and slightly shady proletariat in a London roominghouse shortly after the war. Mrs. Lessing has a cool eye, a controlled sense of humor, and a perfectly competent unmannered prose; and for about the first half of her book anyhow, she keeps touching skilfully on traits and actions that prevent her household from quite lapsing into type. Eventually, however, what had appeared as a pursuit of truth comes apart at the seams: the author is *determined* to admire her lower classes—including their money-grubbing, drunkenness, shiftlessness, cruelty, nymphomania, prudery, and such staple British meals as beans on toast with chips and spaghetti—as well as to detest that mythical country America, because her iron political bias instructs her to. Mrs. Lessing's compassion is a bit too prescribed, and in its sustained bright light her ragtag Londoners begin to appear now, beyond her power of literary correction, like a set of marionettes out of *Punch* and now, equally beyond her condescension and understanding, like a pitiful collection of the prematurely damned.

Mr Love and Justice and *Stand on Me* are also barely novelized English documentaries, of the sort that would probably not have been

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written, at any rate not published, before Kingsley Amis's nose-thumbing breakthrough with *Lucky Jim,* which opened a way for the revolt of the masses in English fiction. Both books are about the London underworld: *Stand on Me* is in fact an autobiographical account, written in London underworld argot, by a petty criminal with a heart of gold. From both books all Anglophiles will be disillusioned to learn that the London police—called "coppers" and not "bobbies"—accept and even solicit bribes, extract confessions by scientific bruise-free beatings, often "solve" crimes by framing innocent men, and share in the proceeds of brothels. Since Mr. MacInnes once wrote a lively and convincing novel (*City of Spades*) about the Notting Hill race riots of a few years back, it is surprising that *Mr Love and Justice* is as rigidly organized as a charade, and still more surprising that its dialogue is unrelievedly and almost incredibly stilted and inept. Here is an exchange between Justice, a copper, and Love, a ponce (pimp who lives off the earnings of a prostitute and in compensation services her):

> Frankie, in his dishevelled garments, looked at the neatly uniformed cop and said, "I suppose you think that they [prostitutes] and we men are a lot of anti-social parasites."
>
> "Yes. As a matter of fact I do."
>
> "Just about what we think of you. Isn't that crazy?"
>
> "I suppose so . . ."
>
> "Well, let me tell you one thing, copper. We may be that, but there's one thing we're not which you are, and that's hypocrites puffed up with spiritual pride."
>
> "I don't see you've got much to be proud of anyway."
>
> "I said *spiritual* pride. We're free from that, most of us easy-money boys. And I wouldn't change that freedom for your prim self-righteousness!"

Stand on Me is better than that, though sometimes the argot reads as self-admiringly as *Time* reviewing an Australian movie:

> After a while Betty and I left the party and had it back to a gaff she was living in, she reckoned that we had better keep dead shtoom because she had a very dodgey landlady who never left off screaming about one thing and another; so we did a creep up the stairs and into this tiny little drum she had at the top of the gaff.

and sometimes it suspiciously plummets into venerable semi-literate bathos:

> I kissed her very softly on the lips, and she responded ever so slightly at first, and then suddenly her arms were round my neck and she was pulling me to her.

Mr. Norman knows he's a lovable fellow all right, and now and then he is rather. His bouts with charge (marijuana) and Benz (of course),

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his working-over by coppers, the terrible beating during which he receives a cheek-long scar merely for flunkying at a girly-show whose boss has defied some hoodlums are all chronicled with a saving good humor and live-and-let-live attitude. There is also a very funny anecdote about several underworld characters, desperate for charge, who plant marijuana in London's Botanical Gardens, watch it being tended and watered by an unsuspecting old caretaker, and finally harvest it in time for a gorgeous charge party. The word for *Stand on Me* is picturesque. The word is almost, though, quaint or cute.

Take a Girl Like You, the latest novel by the Founder and Old Master himself, has the usual brashness, aggressive impudence, and veddy Briddish vaudeville turns:

> "You know, all this women business often strikes me as being a power thing really."
>
> "Lot in that, of course. Though I can't help thinking that sex is pretty firmly tied up with it somewhere or other."

Still, the girl of the title, who has a "warm clean young smell," is so pneumatically vacuous (Amis's notion of girls has always seemed to derive from a careful scrutiny of film ads) that this updating of *Clarissa*—will she or won't she?—limps along without either comedy or suspense in the main plot. The novel is interesting along another line, however. Its hero suffers, pretty steadily, from a nearly heart-stopping fear of aging, decay, and the prospect of death:

> Meditations on the old last end were giving him a good deal more trouble. Well, thinking about sex as much as possible was the only way to lick that.

The most impressive moment in the book occurs while Patrick is listening to an old aristocrat explain the effects of impotence:

> ". . . Until I touch them. Then it's different. But part of it stays the same, what I think, what I feel. So much so I can't believe it isn't all the same. It's all in the mind. It's as if one's right hand had suddenly ceased to function. There it is, it's still a part of one, of course it can pick things up, it can open doors, it can hold a pen, it can pour a drink, it can tie a shoelace. Until one tries. Then it can't. Then it's useless. And it isn't going to get better. That's the thing one can't ever quite believe, I suppose. And what would one do if one did manage to believe it, all the time? That's the really fascinating question."
>
> This had been delivered intermittently enough for Patrick to have poured and drunk one very large glass of port and poured and half drunk another before it finally and unmistakably ended. He got to his feet and said: "Do you think I could. . . ?"

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> There was a slow focusing of attention, then a quick reaction. "Of course, my dear fellow, how shockingly remiss of me. Let me just indicate. Oh, you know your way. Oh yes, you . . ."
>
> Patrick did what he had to do at great speed and without noticing anything, like a man about to catch a train. Almost immediately afterwards he found an outside door and left the house. He did not want to see Lord Edgerstoune for a while or ever again be told anything by him. It was very dark, and he stumbled several times before coming to a level stretch of grass.

Harlequin has glanced into the mirror and there observed, under the dandruff and falling hair which he daily measures on his comb, a very disagreeable grinning skull: "The opening line of a talk recently published in *The Listener* came slouching into his mind: *Why do organisms eventually decline and die? The study of senescence has failed to reveal* . . . Ah, screw that. Screw that like mad. Screw that up hill and down dale, what?"

The Music of Their Singing is a strenuous hip novel that turns, in a mildly amazing dénouement, into a denunciation of hipsterism. Almost everybody talks and thinks Finneganese, notably the Negro musician History Jones:

> Jowls ballooning, eyes on the prowl, History Jones began to make that feisty must-krap ram-bull round the feasty-day railroad siding some shivaree-bob more. He was watching Penelope switch down the steps and he was speculating, as he had more than a few times, that he would like to have him some of *those* shitterlins if any was up for grabs, if any of those why-test and most Prowed-distant jitterlinks was on the sweet market *this* sweet grabbacious season.

The pop-up gimmick at the end is that all this researching of new sensations—drugs, liquor, jazz, shoplifting, casual and crazy sex, fists and knives—is really *morbid,* man; and the Girl Who Knows is a Jewish Swede masquerading as an Israeli pretending for humanitarian purposes to be an Arab spy, temporaily in the U. S. to buy some water pumps for Arab villages. You can tell fairly early that she's a good 'un because she talks in the square-toed, straight-faced, earnest dialect spoken by *good* foreigners in novels, and you have a tiny suspicion that maybe hip isn't what it's cracked up to be when she tells off the musician:

> "You're a whiner," she said. "You whine. When you begin to, how is it said, put the needles in people, strangers to you, about anything and nothing, this means only that you are whining about your condition in life and cover it by being a needler. If at the heart of you you were not constantly fussing about what the cruel world did and does to you you would not feel such a need to make fun and hash of the world every time you think you can get away with it. . . .

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You listen. The Jews stopped their whining and learned how to shoot and got themselves a state."

(One wonders what she would think of the Black Muslim Movement.) Politics is important, perhaps as important as Mr. Wolfe thinks it is; but he doesn't help his case by having the girl report her father's death as if from a serial running on the women's page of *Pravda* (let it be clear, though, that Mr. Wolfe, who once served as a bodyguard for Trotsky, is an anti-Stalinist): " '. . . Just before he died he managed to say, "Another thing. Listen, my girl. The work with the low-cost generators must go on. . . ." ' " History Jones turns out to be a villain along with the rest of the hipsters, whose antics, it seems, are only a perverse lurching after respectability (" 'They circle, and they recite angry free verse and play limp saxophones, waiting for the walls to melt away' "). The climax sturdily distinguishes jazz-black from low-cost-generator-white: the hero and heroine are subdued and tied up by the bad guys, and forced to watch a mass-rape (which leaves its victim, the hip girl, muttering "Want self back" and ripe for the psychiatric ward; so much for her and her big ideas); at length the heroine frees herself and holds the bad guys at bay with a toy pistol till the cops come to round them up and cart them off to jail, where they damn well belong. In conclusion, the heroine Explains Everything, including Sex, to the fundamentally decent young American hero, who thereupon signs up for her Mediterranean Peace Corps. A striking difference between the false heroine (the hip girl) and the true heroine (the political idealist) is that while the former has "astonishing breasts," the latter has "Those legs, those legs."

Revolutionary Road teems with defects. Its style is often so flat-footedly naturalistic that tones and inflections become uncertain and get lost; it is sometimes as fascinatingly unethical as eavesdropping on an ugly quarrel; it reeks with the raw painfulness, the bogus air of quiet despair, and the continuous crafty self-justification of couch autobiography; it attempts kindergarten quasi-psychoanalytic explanations for what the author is obviously helpless to account for and can only report; its secondary characters are cardboard cutouts. It nevertheless builds into a hair-raising novel, a meticulously nightmarish exposition of one kind of contemporary American horror: the educated, smart, sophisticated, handsome, sexually competent young couple who have read the do-it-yourself books and are capable of using each other, but who aren't smart enough to keep from using each other up:

"Look," he said. "Couldn't we sit in the car and talk about it? Instead of running all over Route Twelve?"

"Haven't I made clear," she said, "that I don't particularly want to talk about it?"

"Okay," he said. *"Okay.* Jesus, April, I'm trying as hard as I can to be nice about this thing, but I—"

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"How kind of you," she said. "How terribly, terribly kind of you."

"*Wait* a minute—" he pulled the hand from his pocket and stood straight, but then he put it back because other cars were coming. "Listen a minute." He tried to swallow but his throat was very dry. "I don't know what you're trying to prove here," he said, "and frankly I don't think you do either. But I do know one thing. I know damn well I don't deserve this."

"You're always so wonderfully definite, aren't you," she said, "on the subject of what you do and don't deserve." She swept past him and walked back to the car.

"Now, *wait* a minute!" He was stumbling after her in the weeds. Other cars were rushing past now, both ways, but he'd stopped caring. "*Wait* a minute, God damn it!"

She leaned the backs of her thighs against the fender and folded her arms in an elaborate display of resignation while he jabbed and shook a forefinger in her face.

"You listen to me. This is one time you're not going to get away with twisting everything I say. This just happens to be *one* damn time I *know* I'm not in the wrong. You know what you are when you're like this?"

"Oh God, if only you'd stayed home tonight."

"You know what you are when you're like this? You're sick. I really mean that."

"And do you know what you are?" Her eyes raked him up and down. "You're disgusting."

To this infinitely repeated mutual humiliation there are no alternatives except moments of truce, moments of sexual oblivion, and moments of delusive planning for an impossible future. Nothing lasts except the open wounds: "he was married to a woman who had somehow managed to put him forever on the defensive, who loved him when he was nice, who lived according to what she happened to feel like doing and who might at any time—this was the hell of it—who might at any time of day or night just happen to feel like leaving him." What goes on in the woman's mind, God only knows; certainly the author doesn't; and, in respect of its desperate male bias as in other respects, *Revolutionary Road* resembles the earliest tragic novel about modern marriage, *The Kreutzer Sonata*. The resemblance—parallel, not imitative—is a tribute to this remarkable first novel. But then Mr. Yates has, besides ambition and talent and boosters in the publishing business, something to say.

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SIGURD BURCKHARDT

The Stories of Heinrich von Kleist[1]

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO Heinrich von Kleist, at the age of thirty-four, committed suicide. At the time of his death he was virtually unknown in Germany; he had not seen a single performance of his plays. (They now belong to the standard repertory of every German stock company, and two of them—*Penthesilea* and *The Prince of Homburg*—have had highly successful productions in Paris.) Descendant of a long line of Prussian officers, Kleist had quit the king's service (a defection comparable, in his milieu, to a priest's unfrocking) and, with no strong literary tradition or circle of fellow writers to sustain him, had set out to become the "Shakespeare and Sophocles" of his age. He fell short of his goal, but he did come close enough to rank with Schiller as one of the two major tragic poets in the two centuries between Racine and Strindberg. As a story-teller he ranks most naturally with Kafka, who admired him and learned from him; a case could in fact be made that reading Kleist is a sounder and more promising way to gain access to Kafka than any so far tried. However that may be, Kleist has superb stories of his own to tell; it would be a welcome instance of posthumous poetic justice if the first full translation of his major stories earned his translator, Martin Greenberg, and Criterion Books as much money as it earns them credit.

There are people—Goethe was one of them—who dislike and distrust experimental science because, to get at the truth, it puts nature on the rack. Even if our humanity is not affronted by atom-smashing and vivisection, we may object to the third degree. Those who believe that truth is perverted in the process of being compelled are likely to find Kleist as repellent as Goethe did. By instinct and conviction he was a deviser of tortures, an inquisitor. At times the truths he extorts sound more like howls of anguish; but so, sometimes, do Shakespeare's, Dostoyevski's and Kafka's.

Kleist's best stories test his characters, not against moral norms or by a conflict of norms, but by some incomprehensible fact or given, a datum of experience which the habits of reason and moral sense cannot readily come to terms with. The Marquise of O., a young widow of unblemished virtue, finds herself pregnant, cursed by her father, disavowed by her mother. Burgeoning with a physical and moral reality she cannot explain to herself, let alone to others, she still finds the strength to "surrender to the great, holy and inexplicable scheme of things." Michael Kohlhaas, protagonist of Kleist's longest and, ex-

[1] THE MARQUISE OF O——AND OTHER STORIES, by *Heinrich von Kleist*. Preface by *Thomas Mann*. Translated by *Martin Greenberg*. Criterion Books. $5.00.

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cept for an unsuccessfully cabalistic episode, best story, insists so relentlessly on the restitution of two horses unjustly taken from him that he drives the state to the edge of chaos. But ultimately it is not his fiercely absolute concept of justice that restores a just order; it is the two horses, entities so uncategorizable, so simply *an sich,* that there is no equivalent or substitute for them. In "The Engagement in Santo Domingo" the hero, a kind of white Othello misled by the ambiguity of his desperate situation, discounts the one immediate experiential truth he should have clung to and kills the mulatto girl who has saved him and to whom he has just become engaged (in both the ordinary and the existentialist sense). In various ways in the several stories, the imposing orders men live by—of reason, of the law, of religion—are found inadequate to the humble fact and the *individuum ineffabile;* the truth is in the given.

Kleist's sometimes frightening intensity finds full discharge in action; his stories betray his naturally dramatic bent. (This is not an unqualified advantage; he has a tendency to stage-direct his characters to a degree where the postures and motions he prescribes for them—and which often have the stylized exaggeration of the theatre of his time—begin to impede the narrative.) His stance is impersonal and absorbed, as though his stake were on the outcome and he were standing by to observe the issue of the experiment. He has little interest in exploring subtleties of character by making men act and interact in minutely defined social and moral fields; his concern is with the logic of actions and events rather than with the logic of motives. Thus his stories have an archetypal quality and will, I expect, prompt archetypal analysis. But they do not invite it; except in an early and relatively weak story, "The Earthquake in Chile," his directness and dense substantiality should keep the reader from looking behind the fables for mythical patterns. Kleist's best scenes remain themselves: the Marquise, her purity vindicated, "lying quietly in her father's arms, her head bent back, her eyes firmly closed; while he, his eyes bright with tears, pressed long, burning and avid kisses on her lips, quite like a lover . . . The daughter did not speak, nor did he; he sat bent over her, as though she were his first love, and put her mouth in the right position for kissing." Or the pivotal scene in "Michael Kohlhaas": two run-down nags, tied to a knacker's cart, stand listlessly in the capital's main square and form the center of a turmoil that threatens to topple all established authority; they are so simply and miserably present that they refuse the dignity of being symbols, but we know that there will be no justice until they are once more sleek and sturdy.

Kleist's substantiality is in good part a matter of style and as such creates difficult problems for the translator. Even in German, with a syntax naturally more architectonic than that of English, his periods

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are abnormally complex. Moreover, the complexity is of a particular cast: it does not—like, e.g., Thomas Mann's—arise from the narrator's stance of ironic indirection, nor from a Johnsonian will to bracket the target of right conduct between rational antitheses, nor from a Jamesian compulsion to qualify, shade and modulate the vulgarity of directness; rather, it serves to accommodate masses of circumstantial and seemingly descriptive detail. What Kleist says of his Marquise might be applied to his sentences: when they seem bound to break under the stress of the actual, they lift themselves as though by their own bootstraps into order and mastery. His syntax is atonal, so to speak; it refuses to take for granted, as normal syntax does, a commonly held rational order within which the parts will readily fall into place. Ordinarily sentences, like tonal melodies, satisfy the whistling impulse of our reason; Kleist's periods frustrate it. They thrust up detail—the picking up of a glove, the emptying of a chamber pot—so as to remind us that normal syntax begs the question of intelligibility by refusing to accommodate what does not fit its order.

Here is a typical Kleistian sentence (made already somewhat more amiable simply by having been put into English):

> The next morning, accordingly, the fellow, who had been put in jail, was brought to the Government house, where the Governor of the Palace, with the promise that he would be set free and let off the punishment he had incurred, gave him back the letter and ordered him to deliver it to the horse dealer as if nothing had happened; which base deception the fellow readily lent himself to and with pretended secrecy, on the pretext of selling crabs (which the official had supplied him with from the market) entered Kohlhaas' room.

Clearly the translator must compromise. He must find an idiom which, without ceasing to be English, pushes against the limits English syntax imposes. He must do so, not merely to be faithful to his original (to be that, he must pledge allegiance to the language he translates into), but because Kleist's sentences lose their point if they are rationalized and naturalized; the detail in that case no longer calls the structure into question but becomes mere descriptive clutter. The compromise Greenberg strikes is generally admirable and well sustained. There are times when he seems to me to smooth Kleist more than necessary; but the temptation to do so is, as I know from personal experience, strong and ever-present; to have withstood it so well over the long haul of translating an entire volume is a considerable achievement.

In Kleist's world, an arch stood because the stones composing it simultaneously obeyed the law of fall. But the point was that it stood. Compared to Kafka's, his stories are still classical; in their own historical setting they are modern, because they harshly put the question

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of order rather than beg it. Kafka pushes farther, calls the question itself into question. The very attempt to explain, to make causal sense of the uniquely given, is the source of error and failure in his world; K.'s mistake in *The Trial* is that, instead of looking for *his* door to the law, he expects to find *the* door, the generally applicable principle under which his case will become comprehensible. The metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa is a fact, not a riddle. For Kleist, the Marquise's pregnancy is still a riddle, though, to become explicable, it must first be submitted to as a fact. The machinery of the old law in Kafka's "Penal Colony," cruelly arbitrary though it is, has a self-defining perfection which grants its victims the bliss of comprehension; but when it is put to the ultimate test, it refuses to function: it cannot legitimize itself, and give release to its administrator, by writing: BE JUST. Michael Kohlhaas' sense of justice, on the other hand, is vindicated; in the purity of its initial abstraction it makes him commit terrible crimes, but at the moment of execution he is justified and triumphant.

Oddly enough, Kafka is relatively easy to translate; he commits us to a logic so strange that there can be no syntactical equivalent for it, and so he employs an idiom so carefully unassertive that it raises no claim to any preestablished order. For Kleist the form of discourse could still be made to embody the form of reality; only this conformity could not be assumed, had to be tested and compelled. His imagination moved by compulsion rather than by free creative impulse; but though his stories do not soar, in the end each stands free and massive—like the arch he saw.

NEWTON ARVIN

Melville's *Clarel*

PROBABLY NO AMERICAN POEM BY A WRITER OF STATURE has been less read—and less treated by criticism—than *Clarel,* the long poem Melville wrote in the late sixties and early seventies and gave to an almost wholly indifferent world in 1876. As he himself said, it was "eminently adapted for unpopularity," and indeed it seems hitherto to have been pretty much *un*adapted to even critical and scholarly attention. One easily sees why. For one thing it is enormously long—much longer than the *Iliad* or *Paradise Lost*—and for another its surface is curiously uninviting. The metrical form—octosyllabic lines irregularly rhyming —vaguely suggests Scott or Byron without very often attaining their

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facility and swiftness; for the most part the verse is tight, gnarled, and rugged. The constant omission of articles—"A lamp in archway hangs from key"—is stylistically ugly; and Melville's unabashed use of threadbare archaisms—"wight," "lone," "fain," "eld," "amort"—was as repellant in his own time as it is in ours. The frequently artless rhyming, too—"self" and "elf," "fraught" and "resort," and the like—sometimes throws off the best-disposed reader.

Not only so, but below this stylistic surface the poem is a difficult and uncompromising one. Much of its effect depends on its complex allusiveness—to Scripture, to geography, to history—and yet much of this is necessarily lost on the reader less steeped in this lore than Melville. Intellectually, too, and more importantly, *Clarel* makes no concessions to the careless or even, much of the time, the careful reader. The play of thought is intricate, elusive, sometimes shadowy; and the relations among the various parts of the poem are by no means always evident. If ever a poem called for and deserved editorial exposition *Clarel* does: those who have braved the rigor of its 18,000 lines know that in the end the effort has been worth while, that *Clarel* is one of the most remarkable philosophical poems of the century—perfectly comparable to *The Prelude* or *Empedocles on Etna*—and a monument to one chapter in modern spiritual history that cannot wisely be ignored. Fortunately the poem has now found its right editor in Mr. Walter Bezanson, who has edited it for the Hendricks House edition of Melville's works.[1]

A poem so abounding in allusion cries out, as I say, for annotation, and this is very generously provided here. Those of us who are too ignorant to recognize rather obscure Scriptural references—to Anathoth and Adummin and Milcom—will find the clues to them in these notes; but Melville's difficult allusiveness is not confined to the Bible, and Mr. Bezanson has notes on a whole series of other references such as make an essential difference to the conscientious reader. There are other editorial aids for which one is grateful—a critical index, for example, to more than thirty of the characters in this rather full cast, both identifying and interpreting them; and since the roles of these dramatis personae are complex and sometimes obscure, this index is of genuine critical value. The physical scene, moreover—the Holy Land, especially in the vicinity of Jerusalem—is not always perfectly familiar in detail to all readers, and many of them will be grateful for the maps provided here, as well as for a chronology of the pilgrimage—the "tour," to be literal—that Clarel and his companions take from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, thence to the monastery of Mar Saba, to Bethlehem, and at last, after so many conflicting impressions, back to Jerusalem again.

[1] CLAREL: A Poem and a Pilgrimage in the Holy Land, by *Herman Melville*. Edited by *Walter E. Bezanson*. Hendricks House. $6.00.

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More important, however, than all this is Mr. Bezanson's long and searching introduction, the fullest now and critically the most thorough and penetrating treatment *Clarel* has ever had. This introduction, indeed, is factual as well as critical; Mr. Bezanson gives an account of Melville's own travels in Palestine in 1857, of the "background" reading he did in working on the poem (very like, in spirit, the reading he did for *Moby Dick*), of the contemporary reception of the poem and the critical treatment of it in recent decades, with a summary of the action and an account of the characters—though, in these last, mere factuality yields to critical analysis. The sense in which one of the characters, Rolfe, is a guarded self-portrait of Melville, and another, Vine, an equally guaded portrait of Hawthorne has never been so fully brought out. The intellectual significance of these and other primary characters has not before been so clearly stated, nor has the very rich and complex physical imagery of the poem—the barren landscape, the desolate salt lake, the forbidding mountains, and the constantly recurring sea imagery that counterpoints them—ever been so sensitively treated.

The whole physical movement of the poem, too, as Mr. Bezanson points out, has a symbolic value: Jerusalem is the Fallen City, the journey to the Dead Sea a Descent into Darkness, the stay on its shores Darkness itself, the journey to the monastery of Mar Saba an Ascent, the monastery a Refuge, while the stay at Bethlehem is Beatitude, and the journey back to Jerusalem a Return. This interpretation provides an imaginative emblematic pattern for the poem which it has been left to Mr. Bezanson to furnish. He is perhaps less original in speaking of its philosophical interest; it would be hard to be, for virtually all of its few readers have seen that *Clarel* is one of the most ambitious contributions made by an American writer to that indecisive debate in the nineteenth century between natural science and religious faith, between doubt and confidence, between political and social optimism and a disappointed pessimism about the future of democracy. It belongs high in the category that includes the poems of Arnold in England and the writings of Henry Adams here. *Clarel,* as Mr. Bezanson says, "is a historical poem," and in his introduction he has shown very luminously how and why it deserves to be seriously read as such.

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JAMES E. MILLER, JR.

Emily Dickinson's Bright Orthography[1]

In 1956, the American Literature Group of the Modern Language Association solemnly established the official canon of Great American Authors with the publication of a bibliographical volume which seemed a dignified and permanent entombment of their genius. Their number, Eight, appeared symmetrical and conclusive, and the roster of their names seemed academically definitive: Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, Twain, James. There was wide-spread congratulation that at last such writers as Cooper and Howells, Lowell and Longfellow were put in their respectable, second-rate places.

The Amherst gnome who wrote "How dreary—to be—Somebody!/ How public—like a Frog" would have found in the pronouncement excellent material for a short but piercing poem on the furtiveness of fame. Indeed, someone with Emily Dickinson's keen wit seems to have planned her reputation in the twentieth century to compensate for her obscurity in the nineteenth—all as a series of jokes on professors of poetry. There is a small but persistent knock at the back door of the Academy which the scholars can continue to ignore only at risk of their own reputations, not the knocker's. And the petite Nobody ready to enter might turn out to be more quietly cataclysmic than the imposing Somebodies already on the roster of Eight.

Emily's knocking began with an impressive whack in 1955, with the publication of T. H. Johnson's three-volume scholarly edition of the *Poems,* the first complete and accurate edition ever to appear, correcting errors of previous editors, lining up all the extant versions of each poem, and, by meticulous detective work, establishing a chronology of the poems. This monumental work was followed in 1958 by a three-volume edition of the *Letters* (T. H. Johnson, editor), an event more important for Emily than for most poets because her letters captured as much of the evanescent stuff of her genius as her poetry. The knocking has continued unabated, rising to something of a clamorous staccato in 1960, punctuated by three magnificent super-blows: Jay Leyda's two-volume biography-in-sources, *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson,* Charles R. Anderson's critical study, *Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Stairway of Surprise,* and T. H. Johnson's one-volume edition of the *Complete Poems* (which achieves its brevity by dropping the scholarly apparatus of the three-volume edition).

These publishing events are a feast for Emily compared to the

[1] THE YEARS AND HOURS OF EMILY DICKINSON, ed. by *Jay Leyda.* Yale. $25.00. EMILY DICKINSON'S POETRY: THE STAIRWAY OF SURPRISE, by *Charles R. Anderson.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston. $5.95. COMPLETE POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON, ed. by *Thomas H. Johnson.* Little, Brown, & Co. $10.00.

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meager crumbs which were the sole nourishment of her reputation in the past. When she died in 1886, she had published, in most cases reluctantly, some seven poems—out of a total of some 1775 she had written. When her sister Lavinia gathered together the poems—on scraps of paper, in letters, in the neat manuscript booklets—and took them to her friend Mabel Loomis Todd, there began one of the strangest stories in the annals of publishing. The poems began to appear, with editorial revision, in the 1890's, and new poems were still appearing in piece-meal publication as late as 1945 (*Bolts of Melody*). All critical and scholarly work on Emily's poetry was frustrated by the simple fact that no one could be sure to what extent the poems as published had been tampered with by her editors. Many a critical insight built on a word or phrase blushed with embarrassment on the discovery that the language was not Emily's but Mabel Loomis Todd's or Thomas Wentworth Higginson's. Such a situation is enough to cause critics to stammer and scholars to stand mute, paralyzed by fear of hailing a synthetic genius. Never before has bibliographical chaos created so much critical uncertainty or scholarly irresolution.

But the recent events have dispelled the chaos and instituted the certain certainties so vital to the scholar's work. It is no longer possible to dismiss Emily as the quaint recluse of Amherst, the little tippler genially leaning against the sun, the fantasy bride whose life had stood "a loaded gun" until her imaginary hunter carried her away, the melancholy seer who heard a fly buzz when she died and who rode in a carriage with her lover Death off to a Swelling of the Ground—in short, as a minor talent with an occasional charming, but tortured, turn of phrase. She must be invited to the feast with her peers, and if the places set are not enough, then one of the Immortal Eight must politely withdraw—and Edgar Allan Poe would be just the southern gentleman to excuse himself for a lady. But the French would object, and in an age of International Relations, we must respect their feelings. We'll lay another place and raise the Eight to Nine, a mystic number that once counted the old world muses, surely appropriate to measure the geniuses of the new.

In short, it is time to recognize Emily Dickinson as being, with Walt Whitman, one of the two original poetic geniuses of America's nineteenth century. And it is surely only a matter of time before the psychological critics point out that Walt with his barbaric yawp and public parade of self represents the aggressive male ego while Emily, with her quiet voice and private shyness of spirit, represents the passive female. The critic who demands that we choose between them should consider first our keeping both. Separate they are fragments—however large, still incomplete; together, as one embraces and the other shrinks, they complete each other like the union of magnetic opposites. The fruit of their union is the modern idiom of twentieth century poetry.

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The most recent works on Emily are calculated to restore her to her rightful place in the American literary tradition. But these works do not bring affairs to an end so much as to a new beginning. What they settle is less than what they arouse.

Jay Leyda's *Years and Hours* is a massive compilation of the documents, large and small, important and trivial, that relate to Emily's life. The thought of so huge a work imposed on so frail a figure causes an involuntary shudder, but the results are surprisingly uncrushing. In spite of their density, these documents do not seem to have the weight of all their words; they remain on the edge of Emily's life, beyond the perimeter, where they seldom traffic with her spirit. There are, of course, her own letters, but these bear out rather than weigh in —they seem to offer release and to give buoyancy. In his Introduction, Leyda states as his single aim "to get at the truth of Emily Dickinson." And then, a few pages on, he confesses his failure: "most of our biggest questions about her must remain unanswered." The frankness is refreshing. In all the pages of these two huge volumes, the big questions do indeed elude the reader, and even some of the small shrink and disappear in the multitude of unassimilated details. The greatest service of these volumes is to demonstrate graphically that Emily's life, like the lives of all of us, is made up of a continuous flow of relevant and irrelevant, affecting and indifferent events, and to trace cause to effect, or external happening to internal mood, is hazardous at best, most often impossible. Biography, these documents seem to say, can never be more than a complex web of speculation, and then quite frequently of the trivial and insignificant.

But though the reader is invited to become Emily's biographer, he must still stay within the restrictions imposed by the conditions of a life and by the editor's selections. Of all the hours and minutes of Emily's life, only that small portion which became verbalized and then placed on paper and then survived the succeeding years and then was discovered and then was considered somehow pertinent—only this tiny, tiny portion of her life is spread forth here for our prying eyes. We cannot but conclude that the poetry, with all its cryptic statement and mysterious hints, reveals more than Mr. Leyda's massive selection of facts. By printing the documents without comment, Mr. Leyda designedly abdicates, in favor of his reader, the responsibility of judgment and imaginative extension of fact—the usual function of a biographer. It seems a pity that, after poring over all the voluminous material related to Emily to count her *Years and Hours,* he does not relate the full wisdom of his search. He does reveal some of his speculation, however apologetically, in an introductory section entitled "The People around Emily Dickinson." Here he deals summarily with the three persons most frequently proposed by previous biographers as the objects of Emily's mysterious amorous attachments. In the case of her

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father's law student, Benjamin F. Newton, Mr. Leyda flies in the face of the scarcity of his own facts ("but the bareness of these mementos cannot hide. . . .") to affirm the young man's importance in her emotional and intellectual development. Catherine Turner Anthon is dismissed as the sexual solution to Emily's riddle, but Mr. Leyda guesses at the importance of her influence in Emily's dedication to poetry. And, most surprising of all, the Reverend Charles Wadsworth is, in Mr. Leyda's view ("If I [too] may speculate. . . .") no more than spiritual counselor to Emily—not the unaware, or half aware, beloved as most biographers believe. It is somewhat startling to realize that in these important, generally negative judgments, Mr. Leyda seems uninhibited by the absence of conclusive "accretions of detail."

If Mr. Leyda demonstrates how little can be really known of Emily's important life, Charles R. Anderson shows, in *Stairway of Surprise,* how much can be made of Emily's poetry by generally ignoring her biography. Of course he has absorbed all that has been said and guessed about Emily, but he assigns himself the task of critic, to deal with the reality of the poetry, not the reality of the life. Although there have been critical works before, none has had the advantage of the complete and accurate text of her poetry nor the chronological arrangement of her poems. Like the unsettled biographical problems, however, there remain unsettled poetic problems. What is a manageable and critically valid grouping of her poems, what are her major subjects and themes, what is the best point of departure, what the best perspective? What, indeed, are the finest and lasting poems? Mr. Anderson tries his hand at answering all these questions. He rejects the chronological approach, although it is newly available to him. He begins, instead, with an analysis of Emily's theory of art as revealed in the poems, and he then examines her various attitudes toward nature, continues with an exploration of the poems of ecstasy and despair, and concludes with a survey of her poems on death and immortality. All along the way he is constantly making value judgments, pointing out the successful, laying aside the defective.

Although the Leyda volumes are biographical and the Anderson work critical, it is the latter which gives a greater sense of reality to Emily Dickinson as a living being. She lies inert and enigmatic and almost insignificant behind the multitude of documents in Leyda; but in Anderson she springs to life from the first and breathes, sheds tears, feels agony, cries joy, knows death. By the time we have finished the Anderson volume, we feel that we know a human being intimately by sharing a life's pains and pleasures as measured forth in art. For biography to dehumanize and criticism to enliven is a paradox that Emily would have understood and enjoyed. How could anyone expect (she might well exclaim) a newspaper clipping of a public event to contain the pulse of life stirring in a poem shaped from the depths of a soul?

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When we turn from Anderson to the one-volume *Complete Poems,* we are ready to say with Whitman in *Leaves of Grass,* ". . . this is not a book,/Who touches this touches a man." And we recognize before we read far that, for all the order that Mr. Anderson imposed on Emily's work to allow a systematic treatment, there remain the ragged edges, the inexplicable tangents, the unexplored depths of actual life. For example, we come upon poem 1670, which opens—

In Winter in my Room
I came upon a Worm
Pink lank and warm
But as he was a worm
And worms presume
Not quite with him at home
Secured him by a string
To something neighboring
And went along.

As we read on in fascination, we learn that this extraordinary worm turns into a snake "ringed with power," fair as well as fearsome—

He fathomed me—
Then to a Rhythm *Slim*
Secreted in his Form
As Patterns swim
Projected him.

Our first impulse is to say, "Is this our Emily?" But of course it is, and this poem suggests symbolic depths of her poetry yet unplumbed. It teasingly concludes, "This was a dream." In the future lies the challenging task of a deep-diving biographical-critical study which, while cognizant of dream psychology and psychoanalytical symbols, will maintain a respect for poetic genius and the integrity of art. This demanding work might bring together the massive labor of the Leyda volumes, the critical insight of the Anderson book, and set about deliberately taking some calculated risks in imaginative plunges to the depths of Emily's poetry. In exploring the worm-turned-snake, for instance, this study might first be led to the personal unconscious and Freud, and then beyond to the collective unconscious and the snake of the Garden—to myth and the Mother of us all.

It may not seem so strange to discover childless Emily comprehending such a basic feminine role. Her progeny are her poems, born of her marriage with her Lexicon. Mr. Anderson was certainly right to get her dictionary and trace her meanings back to their source. When she wrote to T. W. Higginson, "Soon after, my tutor died, and for several years my lexicon was my only companion," she was revealing a sublimation and a substitution that ran deep and lasted long. Whatever the future biographer will discover, we know now that the real

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lover between her sheets was her dictionary, and it disturbed her dreams more than any man:

(Poem 276): Many a phrase has the English language—
I have heard but one—
Low as the laughter of the Cricket,
Loud, as the Thunder's Tongue—

Murmuring, like old Caspian Choirs,
When the Tide's a' lull—
Saying itself in new inflection—
Like a Whippowil—

Breaking in bright Orthography
On my simple sleep—
Thundering it's Prospective—
Till I stir, and weep—

Not for the Sorrow, done me—
But the push of Joy—
Say it again, Saxon!
Hush—Only to me!

Never before was a love affair with language so intimate, the "push of Joy" of the masculine linguistic so transporting. It is this ecstasy of language that makes Emily a modern poet: she fondles a phrase until it is aroused and seized with a stiffening desire that ambushes the attention: where the reader expects the softness of feminine sentimentality, he is surprised by the toughness of masculine vigor.

Tough-textured and contemporary, Emily's poetry leaps across time to the present and on to the edge of Immortality. Her brilliance, essentially timeless, derives from her linguistic libido; her genius, essentially modern, sparkles in her bright Orthography. The scholars and critics who take up where Leyda and Anderson leave off, who begin with the fine ground-breaking of the Johnson editions, must next penetrate the placid surface of the life and the "slant" surface of the poetry to the instinctual life below, down into the teeming sub-levels of visionary consciousness, down into the timeless pools of deepest knowing. There, in the secret recesses of her inmost being, Emily may yet yield her profoundest meanings.

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BERNARD STAMBLER

Facilis Ascensus

IN OUR VERSION OF AESTHETIC DEMOCRACY TODAY the artist glories in being the focussed and isolated blind man feeling and explaining the elephant to his fellows; many, not able quite to catch up with the creature, have to make do with where he has been. And what can our critics do but follow?

Irma Brandeis is one of the rare critics who realize that such impressionistic wilfulness—appropriate as it may be elsewhere—will simply not do for Dante.[1] Her task of becoming *dimidiate* Dante—she might prefer to have it called *speculum Dantis*—she performs perceptively and elegantly, proving that, far from harsh drudgery, it can be the warmest of poetic pleasures. That this is a conscious task she indicates in her Introduction, where she states her intent to prove, against Croce (and implicitly against a host of others), that the *Commedia* is " . . . poem . . . integrated poem . . . whole poem, without any dissidence between structure and other elements." This, certainly the only valid approach to the *Commedia*, provides her a working thesis that recalls the story told of Mozart—that, having completed a symphony in his head, he heard it all as one immense chord before setting pen to paper.

The six essays that constitute her book seem at first too slight for such a great task: 1. Substance and Idea, 2. The Image of Sin in Action, 3. Four Images of Fraternal Love, 4. Beatrice, 5. Aspects of Minor Imagery, and 6. The Ladder of Vision. However, they prove to be brilliantly selected for sampling the whole poem and for presenting Professor Brandeis' re-vision of Dante's journey as integrated poetic experience.

This re-vision is directed by the moral clarity of the author. Dante's interpreters today, troubled by his (or by any) Catholicism, find themselves committed to being either uneasily devout or vicariously sanctimonious. Miss Brandeis dispenses with all such gyrations by treating the moral assumptions of Dante (if not always his religion or theology) as valid or valuable today. The consequences are both interesting and profound: by taking his theology as *naturally* as he did she reads the *Commedia* as a nobler version of eighteenth-century natural religion—man is both good and bad; light pulls him one way and darkness another; only in meeting his social responsibilities does a man fill his selfish needs. More to the point, perhaps: God's grace is a universal datum, not an Indian gift to be measured and withdrawn by a man or by a Church.

[1] THE LADDER OF VISION: A STUDY OF DANTE'S COMEDY, by *Irma Brandeis*. Doubleday. $3.95.

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No one can deny Dante's specific and deep adherence to Catholic doctrines; equally, no one can deny that only those of the doctrines that override local and historical accident function as the architecture and motive power of the *Commedia*. Dante's strategy for achieving this lies in the subtle incremental repetition and the quiet amendment that mark the process of his poem; Miss Brandeis' technique is the exposure of this strategy on the several levels of her ladder of vision. Discussing the seeming contradictions in attitude towards a sin in various parts of the *Inferno* she says (p. 42):

> The questions begin to find an answer as soon as one stops assuming in Dante an orthodoxy of definition to which he never lays claim. Over and over again in the *Inferno* Dante enlarges and redefines the narrow categories of sin which he has extracted from one or another revered tradition. This he does occasionally in a phrase which the dramatic action later develops [as the echoing and reappraising of Francesca's definition of love comes in *Purg.* 22], but far more often through the dramatic action, the imagery and the diction, alone.

Occasionally this leads her into a deterministic rigor which may oversimplify Dante's; thus (n., p. 50):

> The *Inferno* is a selective mirror of the world; it stands to reason that if suicides are part of it they must be suicides before as well as after they cut their throats or hang themselves.

But usually her reading preserves the delicate balance among Dante the poet, Dante the pilgrim, and the pilgrim as everyman (p. 57):

> Fear and pity—both haunt the pilgrim throughout the circles of the Incontinent and the Violent, and suggest always in this living traveller, who is at once himself and every man, some potentiality for the sin in question.

Here we have two levels of Dante's strategy: the light cast from later to earlier passages, and the aspects of the poet's involvement in his poem. We come to a third level when these two are combined, as in the meeting of Virgil and the pilgram with Statius (p. 84):

> The reader will have noted that he is here breathing a different air from that of the earlier meetings [in Antepurgatory]—soberer, more restrained, more intellectual: the air of Purgatory proper. . . . What one saw in the power of Casella's music at the foot of the hill, in Belacqua's sloth, in Sordello's lonely watchfulness, was a weight of the world still holding the soul back. . . . Within the gates of Purgatory such entrancements and broodings have no place; here all is an orderly and measured activity and contemplation which mend what has been marred, and get the soul in readiness for its more perfect and final action of understanding and love.

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On this same level of comprehending the unity of the poem is the examination of its imagery. Miss Brandeis cites T. S. Eliot:

> Dante's attempt is to make us see what he saw. He therefore employs very simple language and very few metaphors, for allegory and metaphor do not get on well together.

She properly finds this statement deficient both as poetics and as fact, having, at most, a limited application even within the *Inferno* and none to the other canticles (p. 131):

> The metaphors of the *Inferno* are indeed few, . . . but . . . not only are the *Purgatorio's* metaphors numerous but in the majority of them visual clarity and interpretive insight are there together (with a marked purpose of "adding to what you see"), while in a few (the most striking), visible likeness drops away in favor of insight. As for the *Paradiso,* its discourse glitters with metaphors that say nothing of any visible scene whatever.
>
> . . . The imagery is not predominantly of one kind, nor is it a bouquet. Rather, it varies and develops, in close and revealing correspondence with the growth of the pilgrim protagonist; and not by conscious plan, but by action of a poetic imagination which responds *wholly* to the quality of each successive moment of experience. In other words, the imagery of metaphor and analogy reflects the growth of the pilgrim's understanding in his progress from the dark wood of spiritual blindness, through gradual acquisitions of insight into universal order, to the point where he can not only "read" all the scattered pages of the "book" of the universe, but can see in a single glance the whole restored.

Her fifth chapter is a demonstration of this thesis, leading to the *luce eterna* of *Paradiso* 33:

> Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
> legato con amore in un volume,
> ciò che per l'universo si squaderna.

Her treatment of the highest level of Dante's strategy is, like the thing itself, not to be localized. It is to be found in her appreciation of Dante's realism (his "world-recalling images"), as much in the *Paradiso* as in the *Inferno* (cf. pp. 161-7); of his great achievement, everywhere, of unity of scene; of his ever-deepening enactment of the poetry of love; in short, of all the ways in which this is a poem about a poet discovering and creating a universe that is a poem.

One flaw remains to be noted in the book—instances, perhaps, of her turning from her own path to follow those of other guides. These—and I may be arbitrary in thinking of them as constituting a group—are the critics who, individuals all, make varying use of the tool of

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archetypal myth-patterns. The names cited are estimable ones: Jung, Frazer, Francis Fergusson, Maud Bodkin. But the pointing-out of myth-patterns has always struck me as a sort of nudging datum when used by psychologist or anthropologist, and somewhat less than that for the literary critic; in working with Dante, who is everywhere giving birth to new myths, pointing out myth-parallels (preferably as footnote-wisdom) should be only the first and slightest step taken.

Miss Brandeis' use of Professor Singleton's thesis that Beatrice is an analogue for Christ is similarly unhelpful to her envisioning of the poem. When contained in Professor Singleton's impressive rhetoric this analogy *is* something more than a datum, as an expert reliving of the motives that led Dante to present, flatly and directly in the gender of *Benedictus qui venis,* the parallels (rather than analogue) between Beatrice and Christ. But coming near the end of Miss Brandeis' eloquent treatment of Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise (and after she has pointed out the fallacy of trying to understand the Dantean characters through consistent allegorical equivalents), the analogue between Beatrice and Christ ("Like Christ, whom she typifies through the allegory") only brings to a limping halt her creative comprehension of the quality of Beatrice in the poem.

But these are minor interruptions to her great argument: that Dante is still available to teach that the world is a compact with us rather than a conspiracy against us, and that if the reading of Dante is a discipline it is one of the disciplines for the sake of which consciousness exists.

The Longview Foundation announces the granting of 1960 Longview Literary Awards to the following writers, for work published in THE HUDSON REVIEW:

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS for *"Pictures from Brueghel"*, Spring 1960

HERBERT GOLD for *"A Tale of Two Husbands"*, Winter 1959-60

The purpose of the awards is to stimulate American literature by granting additional compensation ($300 in each case) to work of outstanding merit appearing in non-commercial publications. Unpublished manuscripts are not considered and no applications are accepted, but all literary periodicals are surveyed. The awards are made by a special panel of judges appointed by the Longview Foundation and without the participation of the periodicals themselves.

The panel for 1960 consisted of Saul Bellow, Louise Bogan, Charles Boni, Alfred Kazin, Thomas B. Hess, and Henri Peyre. Twenty-six awards were made.

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ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

Very Like a Whale

MR. HYMAN HAS WRITTEN a little book on two big subjects; but the subjects are not actually treated, so problems of dimension are not primary.[1] He is really concerned with a relation between poetry and criticism; thus his book is chiefly about the "and" in his title. In a page and a quarter of introduction he sets forth a four-part pattern, and then finds it exemplified in four periods of literary history. It is not a very hard pattern to understand. First there is a poem, *A,* called the *standard.* Then there is a critical system which is like based on the standard; it is the *poetics.* Let *B* be the *poetics.* Then there is a deviant work which doesn't conform to *B;* it is the *challenge,* and is represented by *C.* Then there is a new critical generalization which arises out of and justifies *C;* it is the *sanction.* We can represent the *sanction* by *D.*

Now if we make a little chart, to keep everything very clear, the poems and works of criticism that Mr. Hyman talks about will line up under A, B, C, and D like this:

	A *standard*	B *poetics*	C *challenge*	D *sanction*
1	*Oedipus Rex*	Aristotle's *Poetics*	Euripides' *Medea*	Longinus "On the Sublime"
2	*Antony and Cleopatra* by Shakespeare	?	Dryden's *All for Love*	The Preface to *All for Love*
3	*The Rape of the Lock*	Johnson's "Life of Pope"	"Resolution and Independence" by Wordsworth	*Biographia Literaria*
4	*Paradise Lost*	Arnold's "The Study of Poetry"	"Sweeney Among the Nightingales"	"Tradition and the Individual Talent"

The numbers in the lefthand column refer to "four revolutions in literary taste": *1* in the period of ancient Greek literature; *2* in the period of English neo-classicism; *3* in the period of English romanticism; and *4* in modern literature.

Everyone will see at once that Mr. Hyman has created some new categories. It will not, I think, have occurred to many that *Antony and Cleopatra* was a "standard" for 17th-century dramatists. (Which ones

[1] POETRY AND CRITICISM, by *Stanley Edgar Hyman.* Atheneum. $4.00.

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precisely? Ford? Beaumont and Fletcher? Ben Jonson? Whom?) It is not easy to see how *Paradise Lost* is a "standard" for the criticism of Matthew Arnold in any sense for which the poems of Wordsworth would not qualify as well. Longinus, who is supposed to arise out of and justify *Medea,* turns out to despise Euripides; and the "poetics" which is supposed to justify *Antony and Cleopatra,* like the playwrights for whom it was a standard, is represented by a question mark.

It will not have escaped the geometrically minded reader that the crucial relationship in this pattern is that which exists between B and C. If there is no nexus between B and C, we have simply two patterns, A-B and C-D, each of which illustrates the safe but not very thunderous conclusion that criticism of poetry usually presupposes the existence of criticizable poems. Now it would be very surprising indeed if Euripides' *Medea* had been written in reaction against Aristotle's *Poetics;* and I find it hard to think that Dryden's *All for Love* was written as a challenge to the hazy farrago of miscellaneous commonplaces, drawn from the *Shakespeare Reference Book,* with which Mr. Hyman fills the gap where item 2-B should be on his chart. There is something to be said for the notion that Wordsworth was reacting against the philosophy expressed in Johnson's "Life of Pope"; there is rather less to the view that "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" represents a challenge to Matthew Arnold who in turn represents a critical system based on *Paradise Lost.* This is a different view of literary history than one finds in the textbooks. It is highly original. Indeed, it is fantastic.

A great deal of the criticism which circulates these days presents literary patterns which have a very odd mode of being; they are not "real" in the sense of being evident in particulars and available to observation. One starts with one's categories readymade, and tries them out on the raw material. They are hypothetical in a special sense; their value is found less in relevance to historic facts, which are dull and difficult to acquire, than in the sort of critical appreciation associated with them. I say "associated with" not "derived from" because very crude or arbitrary schemas are sometimes associated with subtle and perceptive literary insights—and vice versa. The real test of Mr. Hyman's book, then, is not the ostensible thesis, or its scaffolding, which I take to be shoddy and specious on the face of things, but the quality of reading which Mr. Hyman brings to particular poems.

Here we are taken aback by passages so literal and prosaic that they seem to belong to a high-school text. There is a semi-humorous one-paragraph plot-summary of *The Rape of the Lock* (pp. 85-86) which cannot but make the judicious grieve; we learn on p. 104 that "Resolution and Independence" is written in twenty rhyme royal stanzas, iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme of ABABBCC. As descriptions of living works of art, these passages are of approximately equal value, and they raise the general question whether a reader who has to be told the story of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Rape of the Lock,*

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spoon-fed the definition of rhyme royal, and advised that Satan is not really the hero of *Paradise Lost,* is ready to form any opinions whatever on the relations between poetry and criticism.

Mr. Hyman's criticism, in a word, takes two roads to its end, one very high, and the other very low. Discounting the low, we may briefly sample the high road in a discussion of *The Rape of the Lock.* Mr. Hyman contemplates various lines of attack on the poem, Marxist, Freudian, and ritual. Having implied that all these interpretations are false and adventitious, and quietly allowed the Marxist idea to die unexplained, he gives a view which I suppose we must call Freudian (i.e., he explicates all the dirty jokes and adds a couple of his own) and another which is ritual (Belinda's loss of hair, discovery of Hell, and partial apotheosis constitute an initiation ceremony). Neither of these views is related in any coherent way to the poem as an exercise in social decorum and perspective; in fact, they do a good deal to undermine that view of the poem. Mr. Hyman says with some embarrassment that he is doing just what he said one should not do with the *Rape of the Lock,* i.e., overinterpreting it; but that the poem obviously means more than it appears to. Thus he leaves himself hopelessly hung up as to the level on which he wants to read the poem or the shape he wants to give it. He concludes by comparing the couplet,

> With varying vanities, from part to part
> They shift the moving toyshop of their heart,

to a famous line from Yeats' "Circus Animals' Desertion":

> In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.

Aside from the conjunction of "shop" and "heart" it is hard to see what the two passages have in common or how they illuminate one another. Yeats is talking about himself, an old man with a long history of discarded myths; Pope is talking about coquettish young girls. Yeats' heart is a place of terror, filth, and profound revulsion; the girls' hearts are places of idle vacuity, and the girls are perfectly satisfied with them. Yeats' vision is the culminating experience of the poem in which it appears, the culmination of a long striving brought to ultimate frustration; Pope's is an amused, contemptuous, satiric hit in the course of an incidental discussion of Levity, occurring early on in a social comedy. In a word, the comparison is slight and empty; there is nothing to it but what appears on the surface, and not much there.

It is unpleasant to write in this way about Stanley Edgar Hyman, because many of us feel that his *Armed Vision,* for all its faults of temper, was a liberating study. Undigested as its learning was, and uncontrolled as were its prejudices, an enormous amount of digging went into the book; it was useful, and still is, as something more than an annotated bibliography. But now the armor seems to fit even worse than it did before, the vision is distracted and erratic. At four dollars this small book is a bad bargain.

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GERALD WEALES

A Bunch of Plays[1]

ANYONE WHO FREQUENTS SECOND-HAND BOOK SHOPS, if his addiction takes him to the theater shelves, can tell you that the publication of plays is not a steady process. There have been boom decades, like the two that immediately preceded World War I, when neat, attractive volumes of Ibsen, Shaw, Galsworthy, Fitch, whohaveyou were published, read, passed on. Happily, we are once again in such a boom. Ten years ago about all that the buyer of plays had to choose from—textbooks aside—were the Gassner anthologies, the Random House editions of Broadway hits and a few standard volumes of established American playwrights. Today, the bookstores offer quantity and variety, plays from every period and every country. This run-away interest in plays in print is certainly a child of the times, born of the happy conjunction of the triumph of the paperback book and the success of off-Broadway theater. The review that follows deals with a sampling of the available play volumes, an accidental catch from the salmon-run of books pouring from the presses.

Coward-McCann has instituted a series called Heritage Drama. The first two volumes are three plays by Molière and Chekhov's *A Country Scandal.* The Molière volume contains *Tartuffe, The Imaginary Invalid* and *The Misanthrope,* which is here called *The Slave of Truth;* the "new English versions" are by Miles Malleson. Malleson, an English actor familiar to American audiences through movies such as *I'm All Right Jack,* began his adaptations in the late forties, at which time J. C. Trewin published the Malleson version of *The Miser* in his annual volume, *Plays of the Year, 1948-1949.* Trewin said of the play that it "is as much Miles Malleson's comedy as it is Molière's," a compliment of sorts that is as applicable to the plays in the Coward-McCann collection as it is to *The Miser.* The two things about Molière that attract Malleson are the way in which he carves character out of standard comic types and the fun he has with surprise-disguise routines. Malleson has held on to these qualities, and little else, in his versions

[1] THREE PLAYS, by *Molière.* New English Versions by *Miles Malleson.* Coward-McCann. Cloth, $4.00. Paper, $2.45. A COUNTRY SCANDAL, by *Anton Chekhov.* Translated and Adapted by *Alex Szogyi.* Coward-McCann. Cloth, $3.00. Paper, $1.50. THREE PLAYS, by *Edward Albee.* Coward-McCann. Cloth, $3.50. Paper, $1.50. THE BEST SHORT PLAYS, 1959-1960, edited by *Margaret Mayorga.* Beacon Press. $3.95. FOUR MODERN FRENCH COMEDIES, edited by *Wallace Fowlie.* Capricorn Books. $1.35. SEVEN PLAYS, by *Michel de Ghelderode.* Hill and Wang. Cloth, $4.50. Paper, $1.95. THE OLD LADY SAYS 'NO!' AND OTHER PLAYS, by *Denis Johnston.* Atlantic-Little, Brown. $7.50. THE CONDEMNED OF ALTONA, by *Jean-Paul Sartre.* Translated by *Sylvia* and *George Leeson.* Knopf. $3.50. THE PRODIGAL, by *Jack Richardson.* Dutton. Cloth, $3.00. Paper, $1.35. THE WALLACE, by *Sydney Goodsir Smith.* Oliver and Boyd. 15/-.

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of the plays. It is quite obvious that what Malleson wants to do in his adaptations is to write comedies that are attractive to English audiences; judging by the number of productions, professional and amateur, that his plays have had in England, he has succeeded. Malleson's respect for Molière is that of one theater man for another; he is fond of the French playwright, not reverent, and so the idea of translation has not occurred to him. The question in Malleson's mind is *will it go?*, not *is it Molière?*. On the whole, these plays do go; they are lively and funny. When I saw Malleson's *Tartuffe* a few years ago at the Arena Theatre in Washington I never worried about its relation to the original; I simply enjoyed myself.

What Malleson has done, then, is quite respectable. I am not sure that the same thing can be said for Coward-McCann. In issuing these plays as Molière's without indicating that they are far removed from the originals, they do a disservice to any reader who approaches them as translations of the real thing. Two examples will show what I mean. Malleson has turned *The Misanthrope* into a two-act play, the first of which ends where the third act ends in French, where Alceste goes off with Arsinoé to learn what that pious lady thinks she knows about Célimène's character. Malleson, who has a West-End sense of what the end of an act should be, brings Célimène on stage at this point and has her watch the departing couple out the window and say, "I wonder! Have I been a fool?" This curtain line belongs to the kind of comedy in which the parted lovers are reunited; since Alceste and Célimène are not going to get together, the line is a sentimental misdirection to the audience and a violation of Célimène as a character. What Malleson does to *Tartuffe* is even more outrageous. He takes *L'Impromptu de Versailles,* cuts it heavily, changes it a great deal, adds lines about *Tartuffe* and uses it as a prologue to his version of that play. Heritage Drama? Whose heritage?

A Country Scandal is Alex Szogyi's version of the earliest extant Chekhov play, the one usually called *Platonov* after its hero. It is the story of a provincial Don Juan who is almost a Don Juan by accident, a man who is endlessly attractive to women and who is too tired or too indifferent to resist. Many of the elements and characters that were to appear in the later Chekhov plays are in evidence here: the disconnection between characters that forces them to speak at one another instead of to one another; the preoccupation with money and with estates that are disappearing; the eccentric friend who pays mortgages; the tired, drinking doctor. John Cournos, who translated the play in 1930 as *The Worthless Fellow Platonov* said, as one would in 1930, that "the tragic woof is interpenetrated with comic threads in true Chekhovian fashion." Since that time David Magarshack has saved Chekhov from Stanislavsky, has convinced us how funny the playwright is; so it is not surprising that Szogyi goes a step farther and insists that the play is almost a farce. The play, like much of Chekhov, is comic

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and pathetic at once, its broadness probably as much a result of inexperience as anything else. The Szogyi version, the one that played successfully off-Broadway, is an adaptation and not a translation; the adaptor explains, in a Preface, that he has made many changes. He has cut heavily and he has dropped out a number of characters, often reducing a Chekhov pair to a single person. He has added exposition which, in most cases, is a retreat from subtlety, an attempt to provide the characters with more easily graspable motives. The most important change, however, is in the end of the play. Szogyi says that Chekhov's end is interminable and that he had to do something with it; he neglects to point out that what he does is let Platonov die of natural causes instead of having him shot by one of the ladies who love him. Lewis Funke in the New York *Times* (September 18, 1960) reports that Amnon Kabatchnik, who produced the play off-Broadway, said that the change was made as a result of tests that a communications-research outfit ran on preview audiences; Funke quotes the producer, "A subsequent audience-reaction test as well as the critics' own reactions confirmed the original questionnaire." Szogyi insists (*Times,* September 25) that he made no changes because of questionnaires, but he has not really taken advantage of the opportunity that his Preface offers to clear up the city scandal about *A Country Scandal.* Szogyi appears to be as much Chekhov as Malleson is Molière.

With the publication of *Three Plays,* Edward Albee has joined Jean Anouilh in Coward-McCann's other drama series, Contemporary Drama. As I read these three plays—*The Zoo Story, The Death of Bessie Smith* and *The Sandbox*—I found myself reacting much as I had on seeing *The Zoo Story* in performance. Albee has a number of admirable qualities as a playwright—his needling wit, the sense of rhythm that his dialogue produces, the bizarre invention evident in Jerry's story of the dog and the hamburger in *Zoo*—but at some point in each of the plays, even *The Sandbox,* which is as short as a revue sketch, I found myself sinking into indifference. I cannot escape the feeling that Albee is a talented juggler who has nothing much to juggle, and what, after all, is a juggler without balls? *The Zoo Story* is a two-character play in which Jerry, an outsider of sorts, accosts Peter, a quite conventional publishing type; after sticking verbal pins into him for half the play, Jerry finally forces Peter to kill him. The pin-sticking is funny enough, although the target is conventional in more ways than one, but the play begins to go to pieces, for me, as it edges into sentimental metaphysics. Jerry introduces a concept of love reminiscent of Carson McCullers in "A Tree. A Rock. A Cloud." or Truman Capote in *The Grass Harp,* that one can learn to love a human being only by beginning with an animal or thing, but this idea seems uncomfortable out of the McCullers-Capote context, ill-at-ease alongside the acidity of the opening. Presumably Jerry, who talks so much about the need of making contact, makes some connection with Peter through his death, but

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so grandiloquent an end to so small a play is more incongruous than it is enlightening. In *Bessie Smith,* the Negro singer dies off-stage, when white hospitals in Memphis refuse to admit her after an automobile accident. The play, except by implication, is not an indictment of the situation; it is mainly concerned with the hospital employees, Negro and white, bigoted and not, all of whom are caught in the trap that kills Bessie Smith, although in some cases the trap is baited with economics (the time is 1937) instead of with race. It is the vicious nurse who gets the lines, "I am tired of the truth . . . and I am tired of lying about the truth . . . I am tired of my skin . . . I WANT OUT!" The trouble here is that the characters are sketched in by means of short scenes, which seem to be essays in conventional realism, and that, for all the suggestions of place and pain, they hover on the edge of abstraction. *The Sandbox* has a few sharp things to say about conventional attitudes toward death, but it is placed in a frame that introduces The Angel of Death as a young man doing push-ups; I could not help thinking of the end of *Sheppey.* Perhaps the thought was a fair one, now that I contemplate it; with his mixture of the satiric and the sentimental, his conventional unconventionality, his eye for detail, his obvious efficiency, Albee, even though he is working the avant-garde side of the street, is not unlike Maugham.

The Sandbox also turns up in *The Best Short Plays, 1959-1960,* the latest of Margaret Mayorga's annual play collections, where William Flanagan's music for the play, which is not in the Albee volume, is also reproduced. In this company, Albee's play looks every inch a masterpiece—which goes to show, I suppose, that value judgments on a play have a great deal to do with where the judge is standing. The collection offers variety in subject matter—the heroes ranging from a beatnik artist to the captain of a slave ship—but the plays share a superficiality that suggests that they are aimed at the amateur theater companies, for which presumably the Mayorga volumes are published.

A collection in which there is almost as much variety and a great deal more quality is the sloppily edited *Four Modern French Comedies.* It contains two full-length plays, Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi,* which may be important in the history of French irrationalism but which is no less a bore for that, and *Clérambard,* Marcel Aymé's strangely ambiguous comedy in which the hero walks the thin line that separates madness from divine possession without the audience or the other characters ever being quite aware when and if he loses his balance. It is the two one-acters that make the volume worth anyone's attention. One is George Courteline's *The Commissioner,* another of his fine creations of comic hysteria; in this one a madman reduces a police commissioner—and by extension all that he represents—to snivelling incoherence. The other is Arthur Adamov's *Professor Taranne,* in which a man, accused of indecent exposure, pleads his reputation as a professor; discovering that he has no reputation, he begins to strip. Unlike the plays in the

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Mayorga volume, both *The Commissioner* and *Professor Taranne* indicate the kind of power and suggestivity that a good short play is capable of.

Two playwrights, Denis Johnston and Michel de Ghelderode, have turned up with collections that at least attempt to suggest something of the quality of their long and productive careers. The Ghelderode volume, his first real introduction to American audiences, contains seven plays and a selection from *The Ostend Interviews,* a series of radio conversations in which the Belgian playwright discusses his work. The interviews give the impression that Ghelderode is a semi-recluse, "a man who writes in a room—all alone—and who does not trouble about the fate of his works. . . ." The world of his theater echoes, as he admits, the legends and stories that he heard from his mother, the historical minutiae that he picked up from his archivist father, the bombast and gesture of the puppet theaters, his readings from the Elizabethans, the Spanish of the same period, the German romantics, the French decadents. He learned to "set the rules at naught," to write plays "in accordance with my perspective, and not in accordance with an eventual audience." Thus, perhaps, the diversity among the plays in this volume, and the similarities (they all ring with myth and the supernatural): the Pirandelloesque *Three Actors and Their Drama;* a fable after Brueghel, *The Blind Men;* the ballad-based *Lord Halewyn,* all blood and murk, faintly ridiculous like the early plays of Charles Williams; *Barabbas,* in which Christ's gentleness is much closer to the destructive nihilism of the freed thief than either is to the calculating powers that destroy both. The seven plays in the volume were written between 1926 and 1934, most of them during the years (1927-1930) when Ghelderode stepped out of his lonely room to work closely with the Flemish Popular Theatre. If playwrights, like wines, have vintage years, 1929 is Ghelderode's. The two plays that leap out of this volume, demanding attention, making a collection of Ghelderode an occasion, date from that year: *Chronicles of Hell* and *Pantagleize.* In the first of these, seven priests (I suspect them of representing the Seven Deadly Sins, but I have not worked out the equivalences) assemble to celebrate the death of the bishop whom they hated; in the course of their conversation—a mad, slapstick scramble full of low comedy and casual indecencies—the dead bishop is revealed as a wonder worker, a man of the people, impatient with the church and its institutional concerns. Although he comes back from death like an avenger (he had not been able to swallow the poisoned host), he finally is the victim of the seven; the episcopal palace passes back into their hands. Pantagleize, the hero of the play that bears his name, is an innocent, part-clown and part-poet, who passes through the streets of an unnamed European city, setting off a revolution with a chance remark, carrying off the treasure of the country by inadvertently speaking the password. All around him, in a play that is as hilarious as it is painful, move figures—among the

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rebels and their opponents—who display the self-interest, the self-delusion, the play-acting and pomposity that move all men. By all the conventions of the clown's role, Pantagleize should pass unharmed and unharming through the destruction, but Ghelderode, who believes that "particularly in our time, the Innocents must be slaughtered," puts his hero before the firing squad. These two plays, the "tragedy *bouffe*" and the "farce to make you sad," are not only the best of the plays in the volume, but they illustrate best Ghelderode's "but I believe in *Man*. . . . I don't despair of him, and I find him very interesting, capable of everything—and of its opposite."

The Johnston volume, *The Old Lady Says 'No!' and Other Plays,* is much less exciting. The titular play, an expressionistic comedy from 1929, is yellowing a little at the edges, but it still has vitality and wit enough to make it the best play in the collection. On the evidence of these plays, Johnston is a good journeyman playwright, too eccentric (read *imaginative* if you will) to manage the Broadway product, but never much more than an efficient professional. There is nothing here nearly as bad as the Ghelderode plays that go wrong, but there is also nothing that comes within shouting distance of *Pantagleize.* Which wrenched comparison is, I suppose, meant to be both a compliment to and an indifference toward the bulk of Johnston's work. The Irish playwright's most attractive quality is his irreverence, but it turns up as much in the notes to the plays as it does in the plays themselves. I will treasure his record of a conversation with the top brass of the Theatre Guild, when they produced his *The Moon in the Yellow River* in 1932; it may be fiction, but it is funny enough to be fact.

Among the new single plays that have managed to turn up in this company of collections are Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Condemned of Altona,* Jack Richardson's *The Prodigal* and Sydney Goodsir Smith's *The Wallace.* The last, which is subtitled "A Triumph in Five Acts," is a pious bore that—despite the fact that Smith has some reputation as a poet and that the play was performed at the Edinburgh Festival—should sensibly be avoided by everyone except confirmed Scotophiles. The Sartre play appears to be a psychological study of guilt in which the Gerlach family becomes an analogy for Germany. The chief character is an ex-Nazi soldier who has shut himself away from the world at the end of the war; he lives on false stories of Germany's poverty and hunger which he wants to believe, a national punishment for his own guilt as torturer, his own violation of his gentle instincts. When at last he comes out of hiding to a rebuilt Germany, he chooses to die and his sister takes his place in the room he has left, takes on his guilt. The play is a complicated one, often a confused one, in which Sartre's psychological, philosophic and social concern with guilt extends the play beyond the Gerlachs and Germany to take in all men and all nations. Richardson's play is a re-telling of the *Oresteia* in which the characters—as in the French plays on which this one is modeled—are more

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modern than Greek. His Orestes is a young man who at first chooses disengagement because both his father's heroic view of man and Aegisthus' anti-heroic one lead to bloodshed and tyranny; in the end, of course, he does return to Argos to act out the end of the myth, but the implication is that his choice is no choice at all, that sentimental expectations (in and out of the theater) force him to accept the outdated role of hero-martyr, simply because the world has not yet found a way to use heroism so that it does not lead always to the same violence, the same blood. On the whole, the idea is stronger than the play. One difficulty is that the characterization is never more than idea-deep; intellectual abstractions have moved happily through plays before this, but the movement is slow here where the philosophic discussion hangs heavily, not having Giraudoux's wit to soar on.

***Notes on Contributors** (cont.)*

BENJAMIN DE MOTT's next contribution to THE HUDSON REVIEW will be a review of *The New English New Testament.*

LORE GROSZMANN was born in Vienna and now lives with her husband in New York. She has contributed stories to *Commentary, The New Yorker,* etc.

W. D. SNODGRASS, a frequent contributor and former HUDSON REVIEW Fellow, was the Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry in 1960.

The Irish critic, DENIS DONOGHUE, is the author of *The Third Voice,* a study of poetic drama.

PETER H. LEE, an assistant Professor of Korean and Japanese at Columbia University, has published an anthology of Korean verse in German, and a study of old Korean poetry.

Two of B. H. HAGGIN's best known books were re-issued last Fall as paperbacks: *Conversations with Toscanini* and *Music for the Man Who Enjoys Hamlet.*

VERNON YOUNG has just returned to Stockholm after extensive travels in Germany and Middle Europe.

MARVIN MUDRICK is returning this Fall to the University of California at Santa Barbara after a year as visiting Professor of English at Queens College.

Three reviewers in this issue appear for the first time in THE HUDSON REVIEW. SIGURD BURCKHARDT teaches German Literature at Ohio State. Last Summer he lectured on Kleist at various German universities. JAMES E. MILLER, JR., Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, is Editor of *College English.* BERNARD STAMBLER is Professor of Literature at Juilliard School of Music and author of *Dante's Other World: The* Purgatorio *as Guide to the Divine Comedy.* He has received a Ford Foundation-New York City Center Production Grant for an opera libretto based on Arthur Miller's *The Crucible.*

NEWTON ARVIN is the author of *Herman Melville,* a volume in the American Men of Letters Series.

ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS, Professor of English at Cornell and former HUDSON REVIEW Fellow in Criticism, is the author of *Stendhal: Notes on a Novelist* and *Strains of Discord: Studies in Literary Openness.*

GERALD WEALES teaches drama at the University of Pennsylvania. His most recent book is *Religion in Modern English Drama,* published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

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